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terrupted Summerfield with a bow of thanks to his hostess. "You are only too kind."

"Don't talk about kindness: just make up your mind to be agreeable and to enjoy yourself. Well, Nelly, at what time do you intend to start for the Acklins'?"

"About half-past nine, I think." She glanced at her watch, a dainty diamond-studded toy that hung at her side. "It is after seven now, so I will leave you gentlemen to your meditations and your cigars, while I go to dress. Will Mr. Summerfield accompany us?"

"Yes: I have persuaded him into a little fashionable dissipation. By the way, Nelly, if you have anything odd or artistic in that overflowing jewel-casket of yours, pray wear it to-night. Mr. Acklin has a wonderful taste for antique or artistic bijouterie, and his cabinet of gems is really remarkable."

"I will do my best to dress as æsthetically as modern fashions will permit. Adieu, then, gentlemen, for the next two hours." And with a slight bend of the head to her guest she glided from the room.

"Smooth, silken, insincere!" thought Max Summerfield. "Where *have* I seen that face before?"

"Come, Max, let us adjourn to the library," said Mr. Erle, rising. "I have ordered the coffee to be served there, and we can talk and smoke for an hour or so. It will take neither of us long to dress, and I have fifty things to ask you about."

They were a handsome pair, the two friends, as they stood together in the pale light of the dying day—Max Summerfield brown-bearded, brown-eyed and broad-shouldered, a splendid specimen of athletic manhood in its unwaning prime; and the slighter, more youthful, but symmetrically-formed Erle, with a pallid complexion, dark eyes and heavy black moustache, the very type of a *héros de roman*, yet with something of boyish candor and trustfulness visible in his frank open glance and cheery smile. Warm-hearted, frank, unsuspicious, generous, such was the character which Sydney Erle bore among these who knew him best—qualities invaluable to the friends of their possessor, but such as occasionally cause that possessor to make grievous mistakes in playing the great game of life.

For a few minutes the two friends were seated in the library, with coffee and cigars on the table before them, where also was placed a shaded reading-lamp, which spread a soft twilight radiance through the room. Outside, the evening shadows were gathering: the sun had set, and the blush tints and cold pallor of the evening atmosphere had succeeded to the mellow gold and warm-hued brightness of the sunset hour. The breeze, cold from the chilling kisses of the sea, stole through the open casement, and waved with stealthy touch the heavy draperies that shaded the windows.

"And now, Sydney, I want to hear something about the circumstances of your marriage," said Summerfield, leaning back in his chair, with his just-lighted cigar between his lips. "Remember that I did not even know that you were married, till I landed in New York three days ago."

"Hand me that taper first, and I will tell you the whole story. So! Now, will you take a little cognac with your coffee? No? Well, then, to begin. You remember that when we parted in Paris, I talked of making a tour through the south of France, though I had decided definitely upon nothing. But, as luck would have it, I sauntered round to the Hotel Westminster the day after you left, to call upon the Greshams, and there I met Fred Hilton, who was wild on the subject of old French architecture, and longing for a companion to go poking about with him into all the odd holes and corners possible, looking for cathedrals, and old chateaux, and Heaven knows what. So we made out a list of places to visit, and joined forces on the spot."

"You had better have gone to Italy with me," interrupted Summerfield, letting a cloud of smoke escape from between his half-closed lips as he spoke.

"I don't know about that. I did have a stupid time, that is true, but then, you see, I met— But I will not anticipate. Well, to go on with my story, we started in about a week, and for a fortnight or so we got along pretty well, though the hotels were horrid, and I could not see much beauty in the tumbledown buildings that Hilton was always raving about and buying photographs of. He had a real mania for photographs, that man."

"Like my French friend, Felix Lalande. I believe he has a photograph of every person and every place he ever heard of."

"Well, just as I was getting heartily sick of the whole affair, and was thinking of cutting loose and going off on my own account, Hilton took it into his head to fall sick. An ill-luck would have it, the place he pitched upon for that purpose was the very stupidest little French town I ever saw—a small, sleepy, white-washed, dead-and-alive little place called Villars Villon. The country was flat, the town was dreary, and there was Hilton laid up with a low malarious fever, a relapse, I believe, of the Roman fever he came so near dying of the year before; and there was I, shut up with him to nurse him. Of course, I would not leave the poor fellow there by himself: he would have died—"

"To a dead certainty," interrupted Summerfield.

"Oblige me by not interrupting me any more in that absurd manner. I had a dismal time of it for a week or so. Hilton was never desperately ill, it is true, but he needed constant attention, for he was inclined to a weak, rambling sort of delirium, and required to be closely watched. The only recreation I had was an occasional stroll up and down a narrow, whitewashed balcony which ran along the front of the house, and on which our windows looked; so I could go out there and enjoy my cigar and a breath of fresh air without being out of hearing, or even out of sight, of my invalid."

"And it was during one of these walks that you—"

"Met *Nelly*? Exactly so. I had not even heard of there being another permanent resident in the house, and had never seen her, as she always took her meals in her own room. But one day, seeing me on the porch, she ventured out to inquire how my sick friend was, and to proffer the use of her travelling medicine-chest. The acquaintance thus made soon ripened into intimacy. We met almost daily—she told me the whole of her sad, simple little story, and I got very much interested in her. But the fact is that she fascinated me from the moment I first looked into those wonderful eyes of hers, and I was over head and ears in love with her before I was quite aware of what I was doing."

"And her story—what was it? who was she?"

"Oh, she told me all about herself and her husband (for she was a widow), and about her married life. She was the daughter of an officer in the British army, was left an orphan when not quite sixteen, and was forced to go out as a governess. In one of the families where she taught she met a Mr. Shirley, a rich merchant, who fell desperately in love with her, and married her after a very brief courtship. I do not think her married life was a very happy one—at least, she never seemed to care to talk much about that period of her life. She had not been married more than a year or two when her husband became involved in a speculation, lost all his property, and was obliged to take refuge on the Continent, where he died of a broken heart, caused by his business misfortunes. He left his widow nearly penniless: in fact, the only property of any value which she possessed was a large quantity of very valuable jewelry. Her husband, it appears, had a mania for precious stones of all kinds, and he never would allow her to part with any of her ornaments, his estate having proved sufficient to satisfy his creditors. But when I first met her she was extremely anxious to dispose of some of the most valuable of her jewels, and consulted me several times as to the possibility of finding a market for them in London, Paris or New York."

"And did she sell any of them?"

"No—of course not. We were married just as soon as Hilton was able to get out of bed and be present at the ceremony, and then we came straight home, for Nelly was wild to see America.

"And you have been married how long?"

"Just six months to-day. You can have no idea of how much Nelly is admired. Her fascinating face and perfect figure captivate my sex, and her gorgeous jewelry overwhelms her own with envy and delight. She wore a parure of coral at the Ellis's ball two nights ago, which drove all the women in the room half frantic, and her diamonds surpass anything yet seen at Newport."

"Accept my congratulations;" and Max Summerfield gravely shook hands with his friend, and then lit another cigar.

"And now, old fellow," said Sydney, when both ceremonies had been satisfactorily concluded, "have you nothing strange, wonderful or exciting to tell me respecting your recent travels? I am quite tired of talking, and feel inclined now to play the part of listener."

"There is a story," said Summerfield, leaning back in his chair and looking dreamily up at the smoke-coils that rose and faded into the darkness, "that has been running strangely in my head for some hours past, and perhaps if I tell it to you the ghost of it may be laid, and may cease to worry me.

"When I first went to Rome to study, some years ago, I formed the acquaintance of an old Italian jeweler named Angrisani, who had a great reputation for taste and artistic excellence, as well as for peculiar skill in workmanship. His setting of antique gems and scarabæi was acknowledged to be unrivaled, and his imitations of the ancient Etruscan bijouterie were simply perfection in their way. I went to him first to order some trinkets for my sister, and was so struck by the beauty and æsthetic feeling of his work that I grew insensibly into the habit of dropping in every few days to look at his productions and to have a little chat with the old man about ancient art. Old Angrisani became very fond of me, and was wont to say that I was one of the very few persons who had ever really understood him or appreciated his work. He was a true artist, though in a small way. He occupied a little dingy room in one of the small, dark, narrow streets near the Piazza di Spagna, but, dingy and out of the way though his dwelling might be, he was not without noble and even royal customers, for he was a decided celebrity in his peculiar line. He mounted a splendid emerald for the Empress of Austria, and Queen Pia of Portugal ordered a complete parure of cameos from him, while his setting of the Queen of Spain's rubies delighted every one except their stupid owner.

"One evening I strolled into the shop, and I found Angrisani in an unusual state of excitement. He had just received an order most marvelously flattering to his *amour propre*, as well as suited to his taste. A package of very fine antique gems had been sent him by King Francis of Naples, with orders to mount them as a necklace.

"'For his intended bride, I suppose?' I said, for the approaching marriage of young Bomba with the lovely sister of the Austrian empress was then one of the topics of the day.

"Old Angrisani laughed and shook his head. Little by little, and with much mystery and many injunctions to secrecy, he revealed to me the true history of the projected necklace. King Francis was at that time under the dominion of a beautiful English woman, a Mrs. Tressilian, who ruled him with a sway as absolute as ever Lola Montez exercised over Ludwig of Bavaria. She was pointed out to me at the Opera in Florence some years later—a superb-looking creature, with red-gold hair, great hazel eyes and a gorgeous English complexion, all cream and carmine. Well, among this fair lady's whims, she took a fancy one day to have one of the still-buried houses in Pompeii disinterred for her amusement, and she exhorted from her royal lover a promise that he would present her with its contents, whatever they might be. She was wonderfully lucky, for the cellar of the house thus unearthed the workmen discovered a skeleton, supposed to be that of the master of the mansion, and beside the skeleton there were found two finely-wrought silver vases and some twelve or fourteen cameos and intaglios of the very choicest workmanship. And it was these gems that Angrisani was commissioned to mount. I do not think that I ever saw finer ones outside of the great museums of the world. There was one, an oval sapphire engraved with a group of Cupids, which was pronounced by connoisseurs and antiquarians to be perfectly unique, and there was a head of Medusa, cut in a greenish semi-transparent stone, which was a marvel of expression. I remember them all—in fact, I saw them so often and studied them so thoroughly that I could draw the design engraved on any one of them this moment. I went often to watch the progress of Angrisani's work, to look over his designs, and to talk with him about them. When the necklace was finished it was a true work of art as well as a gorgeous ornament. The setting in its general effect was Etruscan, but each gem was mounted in a different style, and in a pattern that had some connection with, or peculiar fitness for, the subject engraved upon it. Thus, around the Medusa was coiled a golden serpent; a cornelian engraved with the rescue of Andromeda was held in the curves of a slender scaly sea-monster; and a vine branch was twined around a superb sardony engraved with the marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne; yet the art of the jeweler had so managed each design that the difference between them at a little distance was scarcely perceptible. The finest gem of the whole collection was suspended as a pendant in front: it was the sapphire of which I have already spoken.

"'Well,' said Angrisani, the day he displayed the necklace to me for the last time prior to its transmission to Naples, 'the fair Tressilian can pride herself upon one thing—namely, the possession of a perfectly unique ornament.'

"'Will you never make another like it?' I inquired.

"The old man shook his head: 'Where could I find such gems? and who could afford to pay me my price for such workmanship? Only a king, and a king in love, would ever be so extravagant.'

"So I looked my last, as I then thought, at the exquisite ornament, and I saw it enclosed in its crimson velvet case with a sigh. It was the only trinket which I ever really cared to possess—which I ever truly coveted.

"The night on which I saw Mrs. Tressilian at the Opera in Florence (it was two years ago last winter, I think), she had that necklace on. It divided public admiration with her splendid beauty, but I was told that she very seldom wore it. She preferred to adorn herself with her superb suite of diamonds or some other of her more showy sets, for King Francis had proved a prodigal lover, and her jewels were said to be of immense value. I was told that her coral set was of almost fabulous value, and was even finer than the one which the city of Naples afterward presented to Victor Emmanuel's daughter, Pia, as a wedding-gift. Last summer, when I was in Switzerland, I read in *Galignani* an account of the murder, by poison, of Mrs. Tressilian, and it was supposed that these very jewels had been the temptation which led to the crime."

"Was the murderer ever discovered?" asked Sydney with a stifled yawn.

"The question has, I believe, never been satisfactorily solved. There was a person arrested and tried for the crime, a distant relative of Mrs. Tressilian—a young woman named Emily Shaw—who lived with her as companion, but there was some flaw in the evidence, and the jury brought in a verdict of Not Proven. The trial took place in Edinburgh. Mrs. Tressilian had gone there to see about some property to which she had fallen heir, and she died within a few weeks after her arrival in the city. But the oddest part of the whole story is, that her jewels disappeared, and both Scotch and English detectives have tried to discover their whereabouts in vain. Some of her trinkets, including her Pompeian necklace, were so peculiar that they would certainly have been recognized had they ever been offered for sale. Emily Shaw was, I am convinced, the guilty party. I read the evidence over very carefully, and by so doing I arrived at that conclusion; but what did she do with the jewels? It is an odd case altogether."

"Rather. But here comes Mrs. Erle. Time to dress, Max; I had no idea it was so late."

There was a soft rustle of the trailing folds of a woman's dress without—that frou-frou of silk which some French writer calls the music of a beautiful woman. Mrs. Erle swept slowly down the stairs, and paused beneath the hall chandelier which hung just outside the library door to give some last directions to her maid, who was following her with her gloves, fan and white cloak. The lamplight fell full upon her as she stood there, and revealed the minutest details of her toilette. She was attired in a mist of transparent muslin and Valenciennes lace, floating over an underdress of pale green silk, and around her beautiful neck, reposing on the warm white velvet of her unveiled shoulders, shone a necklace formed of antique gems and mounted in an exquisitely wrought Etruscan setting of yellow gold.

As if moved by a common impulse, both men rose to their feet when their eyes fell upon the form of Mrs. Erle. There was silence for a moment, broken only by the convulsive breathing of Sydney Erle. At last he spoke, in a hoarse, hollow tone that his dearest friend would never have recognized as being his voice: "Max, look at that necklace; do you recognize it?"

There was no answer. Max Summerfield turned away and hid his face in his hands.

"Answer me," continued Sydney in the same strained, unnatural voice. "I *will* know the truth. Is that the Pompeian necklace—the necklace of Mrs. Tressilian?"

Before Max could reply, Mrs. Erle glided into the room. She took her seat at the table, and the light from the shaded reading-lamp fell full upon her, leaving the figures of her husband and Summerfield in obscurity.

"Well, gentlemen," she said gayly, "hasten to put on your dress-coats and your white ties. The carriage will be here in fifteen minutes. How do you like my dress, Sydney? Is the tint of the blue of this necklace go well with the light-green of this silk?"

"Admirably! But what a beautiful necklace that is, Eleanor! Where did you get it?"

Sydney spoke in his usual tone, and she replied: "It was one of Mr. Shirley's numerous purchases. He gave it to me as a birthday present."

"How long ago? Can you remember the date?"

"Oh, six or seven years ago—I cannot tell you exactly. You know," she continued, looking down, and in a grave tone, "he has been dead nearly three years."

"Indeed! Max, come here and look at these exquisite gems." Young Erle's fingers closed with an iron clasp upon his friend's wrist, and Max reluctantly obeyed his words and gesture. "See," continued Sydney, pointing to the various stones of the necklace, "is not the workmanship of that head of Medusa marvelous? and that cornelian—how perfectly it is wrought! I scarcely know which to admire most—the gems themselves or their setting. And that engraved sapphire—what is the design? Oh, two Cupids—how charming!"

"But you must hurry, gentlemen," Mrs. Erle said, clasping one of her bracelets that had come unfastened. "Sydney, you are not usually such a laggard."

"No; but do you go on, and send the carriage back again for us. I do not feel inclined to go just yet."

"What! alone? Why, Sydney—"

"Yes: Max has been telling me an interesting story, and I want to hear the end of it. So go—go at once."

She rose slowly, reluctantly from her seat. Her eyes were fixed in unspeakable amazement on the face of her husband.

"Go—I tell you, Eleanor!" cried Sydney, his hardly maintained self-control on the point of giving way.

Mrs. Erle turned to quit the room, her cheek crimson and her eyes glowing with indignation.

"But stop!" cried her husband, struck by a sudden thought. "Take off your necklace and leave it here: I want to look at it. I do not want you to wear it."

"Take off my necklace! Are you mad, Sydney? Why you told me yourself—"

"Take it off!" he almost shouted. "Do you hear me?"

A sudden thought seemed to strike Mrs. Erle, a swift perception of the truth. Every vestige of color fled from her face, leaving her ghastly in her deathlike paleness. She raised her trembling hands to the clasp, but her agitation was so great that she could not unfasten it, and Max, moved to pity, stepped forward to aid her. As he did so she looked up into his face—that brave, manly face whereon was written grief and horror, yet not unmingled with compassion. To his dying day Max Summerfield will never forget the wild, terror-struck, despairing glance of those weird, expressive eyes—a look such as he had once seen in Paris after the fall of the Commune in the eyes of one of the *petroleuses* as she faced the guns of her executioners. The glittering ornament fell from her bent neck upon the table: then she seemed to regain her composure. "Au revoir, then," she said, with a smile that sat but ill upon her wan, white features. "My cloak, Justine, and my gloves and fan. There is the carriage, I think." And with a slight gesture of farewell she glided out into the hall. The front door was opened, then closed, and the roll of wheels sounded down the carriage-road. She was gone.

After listening a moment to the retreating wheels, Sydney rose. "Max Summerfield," he said, gravely, "you profess to be my friend. Now prove your friendship by answering me truly. Is this necklace the one made by Angrisani—the one you saw worn by Mrs. Tressilian?"

"Sydney," said Summerfield in a tone of intense suffering, "I wish that I had died before I ever brought such sorrow upon you. Yet I *will* answer, and that truthfully. To the best of my knowledge and belief, that is the Pompeian necklace made for Mrs. Tressilian—the one whose manufacture I watched so closely, and which I once saw on the neck of its owner."

"A little over two years ago, I think you said?"

"I did, but may not Angrisani have lied? May not this be the original from whose designs—"

"You talk insanely," interrupted Mr. Erle, sternly. "How could there exist duplicates of such singular antique gems? Yet was there no private mark upon the

necklace—nothing by which you could identify it?"

Max thought a moment. "Yes," he said, "I remember now that Angrisani once pointed out to me a small Greek letter cut on the under surface of the cameo of black-and-white onyx. If that necklace be indeed the late property of Mrs. Tressilian—"

Even as he spoke Sydney reversed the cameo. The tiny letter was plainly visible on the dark polished surface. He flung the necklace from him as though it had been a serpent. "And so," he cried, "I am the husband of an impostor—a murderess!"

"You are hasty, Sydney. Wait—have patience before you judge. May not Mrs. Erle be able to account satisfactorily for the manner in which the ornament came into her possession?"

"You heard what she said when I questioned her?"

"But pause—have patience—seek for proofs. Can no one in this country swear to Mrs. Erle's identity with Eleanor Shirley?"

"No one. Unless you can prove to me that she is not Emily Shaw, I must go abroad to discover the truth. And the suspense—how can I ever bear the suspense?" He paced the floor with hurried, agitated steps as he spoke.

§ Max Summerfield was silent for a moment. Then he said, in tones through which pierced an inflection of painful hesitation, "What I am about to say may open to you a certainty of suffering. Yet it is better, I should think, for you to know the worst at once, or to discover at once that all this affair has been a frightful mistake, a fearful nightmare, and that your wife is not what you suspect her to be."

"Is she, or is she not, Emily Shaw, the poisoner? Can you answer that question for me?"

"I can."

Mr. Erle paused in his agitated walk. "And how?" he asked eagerly.

"Sit down, and I will tell you. I spoke to you some time ago of my French friend, Felix Lalande, and of his mania for photographs. His collection is arranged in sets and mounted in large albums—actors, authors, statesmen, beauties, bullet-girls, and so on, being each arranged in a separate volume. One album contains the portraits of celebrated female criminals, and amongst these portraits is that of Emily Shaw."

"Are you certain?"

"Perfectly so. He showed me his collection only yesterday. I dined with him, and, in fact, spent nearly the whole day with him—at least, till it was time to go to the boat."

"I remember; and you thought you had seen Eleanor's face somewhere before? Well, write to him—write at once, and tell him to send you that portrait."

A blotting-book of Russia leather lay upon the table. Without further speech Summerfield opened it. Mr. Erle laid before him a plain sheet of note-paper, without crest, monogram or initials, and in a few moments the brief letter was written, folded, directed and sealed.

"Lay it on the hall table, Summerfield. We must go to dress now, for I suppose that I must appear at the Acklins' to-night, if only for five minutes. And how shall I be able to hide the truth from her? Oh, Max! how I have loved her!"

Without waiting for a reply, he quitted the room and ascended the staircase. Max lingered in the hall to place his letter on the table Mr. Erle had designated to him, and as he turned from doing so to follow his friend the hall door was pushed open, and James, the coachman, peered stealthily in. Though struck by the oddity of such a proceeding on the part of one of the well-trained servants of the Erlesmere household, Mr. Summerfield took no further notice, and waited only to ascend the stairs, when his own name, called in half-whispered accents, arrested his further progress: "Mr. Summerfield, come here, please." He looked round. James was beckoning to him in a hurried, eager way. His trim gray livery was in sad disorder, and there were spots of blood on the sleeve of the arm which he extended toward Mr. Summerfield in his anxiety to attract the attention of the artist.

"What is the matter?" asked Max in amazement as he noticed the disordered dress and agitated air of the old servant.

"There has been a dreadful accident, sir. I think Mrs. Erle is killed."

"Good Heavens! How did it happen?"

"The horses took fright at a boy with a lantern, who was running along by the side of the road. But I could have managed the horses, I think, only Mrs. Erle screamed to. And then she jumped out—and her dress caught in the wheel—and she is terribly hurt about the head. I think she is dying: anyhow, she hasn't spoke since the accident."

"And where is she?"

"We got the horses stopped at last, and we put some boards across the seat of the carriage, and the cushions on them, and we brought her home. But who will tell Mr. Erle, sir? It will half kill him—he is so fond of her."

As he spoke the hall door was pushed wide open, and two men entered, bearing between them the improvised couch on which lay, lifeless, unconscious, dying, the fair woman who a few brief hours before had been decking herself for an evening of gayety. Her fair hair was stained with blood, her witching eyes were closed, and her costly dress of Valenciennes lace hung round her in soiled and unseemly tatters. It was a pitiful and a ghastly sight, the white face and rigid features already darkened with the shadow of approaching death: and in grim and mocking contrast with them was her gala attire, the crushed feathers still clinging to the blood-bedabbled tresses, the white gloves upon the hands now clenched convulsively in the throes of approaching dissolution, and the pale green shining folds of her dress trailing over the stiffened, motionless limbs.

As Max gazed horror-stricken upon the spectacle before him, a cry rang through the hall: "Nelly, Nelly! my wife, my darling!" And Sydney Erle rushed down the stairs and fell prostrate beside the dying woman.

He stayed a few hours longer, if life it could be called which consisted merely in the pulsations of the heart and the faint breathing that stirred her breast. But even these grew feebler and slower, and so, without a word, without a glance, without an instant of consciousness, she passed from the semblance of death into a likeness of peaceful slumber which was death itself.

Two days after the funeral, Max Summerfield came into the library where the young widower was overwhelmed with that dull stupor and exhaustion which follows the first keen sharpness of a great grief. Max bore in his hand a sealed packet. It was the answer to his leter to Felix Lalande: it contained the photograph for which he had written. Without a word he laid it before Sydney Erle.

Mr. Erle took it up, glanced at it and mechanically broke the seal. The photograph fell from the unfolded letter on the floor. It was inclosed in a blank envelope. Sydney stooped and picked it up. "So *this*," he said, after glancing at the letter, is the photograph of Emily Shaw?" Summerfield bowed his head in silence. "And so," continued Sydney, still holding the unopened envelope in his hand, "all my doubts may be set at rest. One look at this picture in my hand, and I may curse the memory of the dead woman who was so dear to me—who dwells now a pure and hallowed vision in my heart of hearts. One look, and my past may be poisoned, my future embittered, and the ghost of a past crime, the dread of possible shame, may haunt my footsteps through all my days to come. Never!"

He took a match from the table, lighted it and ignited one corner of the little parcel. He held it firmly till the flame nearly reached his fingers: then he threw the smouldering remains of the photograph upon the hearth and watched till they were entirely consumed.

"Thus, Max, old friend, I end my suspense, my doubts and my anguish of mind. Make what apologies you can from me to M. Lalande for my destruction of his photograph."

And the Pompeian necklace—what of that? Search was made for it, but in vain. It had disappeared from the library table, having probably been abstracted by some interloper during the confusion incident upon the occurrence of Mrs. Erle's sudden death. Like a baleful talisman, its mission of misery ended, it had vanished from the scene of its evil works. At all events, it was never heard of more, having probably been broken up by the thief to avoid detection.

But as Max Summerfield sits alone in his New York studio he often muses over the events of that fearful evening, and such questions as these shape themselves unbidden in his mind: "Was she, or was she not, Emily Shaw? Was her leap from the carriage that night caused by terror, or was it a deliberate attempt at suicide? And if she was not Emily Shaw, how did she become possessed of the Pompeian necklace?"

Felix Lalande wrote to a friend in Edinburgh to procure him, if possible, a duplicate of the photograph which Mr. Erle had destroyed, but received from his friend the intelligence that every copy had been bought up some months before, and that the negative had also been purchased and destroyed. This had been done, so wrote the Edinburgh correspondent, by the lawyer who had defended Miss Shaw, and who was supposed to act as the agent of some party or parties unknown.

And so an unfathomable darkness, an impenetrable mystery, settled over the story of the Pompeian necklace. Once its gems had been hidden from the light by the ashes and the lava-floods and the poisonous vapors that destroyed a city: around its second disappearance hung the baleful atmosphere of a great crime, the darkness of the shadow of death.—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

MOHAMMED ALI AND HIS HOUSE. An Historical Romance. By L. MUHLBACH, author of "Joseph II. and his Court," etc., etc. Translated from the German by CHAPMAN COLEMAN. With Illustrations. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by Clarton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Philada.

A MILLION TOO MUCH. A Temperance Tale. By MRS. JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT, author of "Priest and Nun," "Jug or Not," "The Best Fellow in the World," etc. Published by Porter & Coates, 822 Chestnut street, Philada.

GOOD SELECTIONS IN PROSE AND POETRY, for Use in Schools and Academies, Sodalities, Literary Societies, etc. By W. M. JELLIFFE, Teacher of Elocution. Published by J. W. Schermerhorn & Co., New York; and also for sale by J. A. Bancroft & Co., 512 Arch street, Philada.

LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE, for February, 1872. There is an interesting paper on the "First American Art Academy;" "Scrambles Among the Alps," by EDWARD WHYMPER, is continued; and a new serial story by WILLIAM BLACK, entitled, "The Strange Adventures of a Phæton," is begun. The number also contains "The Loosing of Lady," "Victor Hugo," "A Gold-Hunt on the Yellowstone," "Adieu!" etc., etc. Published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philada.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, for February, contains the continuation of "Septimus Felton," "Morrice Lake," "In a Wherry," "Jefferson, a Law Student," "The Poet at the Breakfast Table," "The Castleworth Tragedy," Recent Literature, Art, Music, etc. Published by James R. Osgood & Co., Boston.

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY, for February, contains "The Fox-Hunters," "The Wonders of the West," "The Mormons and their Religion," "How One Woman Kept Her Husband," "Christine Nilsson and her Maestro," "A Ballad of Calder Water," "Defects of the National Banking System," etc., etc. Published by Scribner & Co., New York.

THE GALAXY, for February, contains "Louis Napoleon in England," "The Magnolia," "John Ruskin," "One July Day," "Fifteen Years a Shakeress," "The Blessing of Sudden Death," "Three Loves," "The Management of Cities," "My Russian Friend," etc., etc. Published by Sheldon & Co., New York.

☞ A female editor on a Milwaukee paper and an ostensibly masculine one on a La Crosse journal are making love to each other through the columns of their respective organs. He calls her "a charming young lady," and tells her how her words thrill through him like a beautiful dream; and she reiterates. The publicity which they are giving to the little affair doesn't seem to worry them at all.

☞ At Newberry, Eng., a gentleman recently made a wager of £5,000 that at eight o'clock on a particular evening he would sit down to dinner in a well-woven, well-dyed, well-made suit of clothes, the wool of which formed the fleece on sheep's backs at five o'clock that same morning. Two sheep were shorn; the wool was washed, carded, stubbed, roved, spun and woven; the cloth was scoured, fulled, tented, raised, sheared, dyed and dressed; the garments were made. At a quarter-past six he sat down to a dinner at the head of his guests, in a complete damson-colored suit—thus winning his wager with one hour and three-quarters to spare.

☞ A street in Peoria, Ill., which a year ago was called Turtle Dove avenue, on account of so many newly-married couples living in it, is now known as Nursery Row.

☞ They have a policeman in Springfield, Mass., who captured a highwayman and then refused a reward of $500, which had been offered by the city for his capture, remarking that he simply did his duty. He will probably be acquitted on the plea of insanity.

☞ Phebe Cozzens, of St. Louis, has been admitted to practice in the higher courts of Arkansas. A Little Rock lawyer said to her: "While I do not know that I can congratulate you as a brother, yet I feel that it is in order to welcome you as a cousin," which, for Little Rock, may be considered good.

☞ A young man was before Justice ——, of New York, as a witness, and in the course of his examination said something offensive, whereat his honor retorted: "Young man, if you speak in that way again, this court will forget its dignity and punch you in the snoot."

☞ A Missouri youth named Henderson squandered a fortune of $120,000, by gambling, in less than four years, and is now absolutely penniless.

A Melancholy Break-Down.

There are lively break-downs that make an audience laugh, and there are sad and sorrowful break-downs that make the kind-hearted grieve. To the latter class belongs the enervation of body and mind which is usually called "general debility," or "nervous weakness," and which, when neglected, too often terminates in atrophy and death. A wholesome medicated stimulant is the one thing needed in cases of this description, and science and experience unite in pointing to PLANTATION BITTERS as the true specific. The fact that it combines the properties of an invigorant with those of a regulator and alterative, in exactly the proportions necessary to produce a radical change in the tone of the system, and the action of the digestive and secretive organs, is an unanswerable argument in its favor as a general restorative.

PROSPECTUS FOR 1872.

THE LADY'S FRIEND.

REDUCTION OF PRICE!

SPLENDID STORIES.

The publishers of THE LADY'S FRIEND have concluded to reduce its price to single subscribers from $2.50 to $2—the prices to Clubs (already very low) remaining the same.

They shall continue to obtain for their readers the very best novelets, stories, poetry, etc., that can be procured, including articles from the gifted pens of Miss Amanda M. Douglas, Miss A. L. Muzzey, Daisy Ventnor, August Bell, Mrs. Margaret Hosmer, A. M. Fenn, Madge Carroll, Kate R. Ripley, Nora Perry, M. C. Pyle, Ida Rowland, etc., etc., etc.

The following novelets, with the usual variety of short stories, are announced for 1872:

WITHIN THE MAZE;
OR,
LADY ANDINNIAN'S TRIAL.
By MRS. HENRY WOOD, author of "East Lynne," "Dene Hollow," &c.

UNA AND HER LIONS.
By MISS A. L. MUZZEY, author of "One Woman's Experience," "Halsnay," etc.

QUEEN COQUETTA.
By DAISY VENTNOR, author of "Prince Charming, etc., etc.

ONLY A WISH.
By A. M. DANA, author of "Jarring Chords, etc., etc.

MISSION WORK.
By Mrs. MARGARET HOSMER, author of "A Turn in Fortune's Wheel," etc., etc.

AN EVERY-DAY HEROINE.
By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS, author of "Solid Silver," "A Little Money," etc.

ENGRAVINGS!

The Engravings of THE LADY'S FRIEND are of a very superior character. They embrace beautiful pictures of subjects which touch the sentiments and affections, illustrations of our Novelets and Stories, illustrations of the Fashions, (including cuts from which patterns for almost everything can be ordered at a low price,) illustrations of Ladies' Fancy work, etc.

MUSIC.

A piece of the latest and most fashionable Music accompanies every number. The Music is of itself worth the price of the magazine.

The Most Refined, Beautiful, and Interesting of the Magazines!

In short, THE LADY'S FRIEND aims to be, and its proprietors think it is, the most refined, Beautiful, and Interesting of the Magazines—*being in Cover, Engravings, and Contents just what a lady's magazine should be.*

TERMS—Always in Advance.

One Copy, - - - - - $2.00.
1 Copy of the Lady's Friend ($2) and 1 of The Saturday Evening Post ($2.50), for $4.00.

[Our club terms are the same as those of that old and popular paper, THE SATURDAY EVENING POST—in order that the clubs may be made up of the magazine and paper conjointly when so desired.]

☞ The magazines or papers in a club will be sent to different Post-offices, if desired.

☞ The contents of THE LADY'S FRIEND and of THE POST will always be entirely different.

☞ Subscribers in British North America must remit *twelve cents extra*, as we have to prepay the U. S. postage.

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ENTIRELY NEUTRAL IN POLITICS

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Largest and Cheapest of the Family Papers!

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ABLEST WRITERS

that can be procured—including Mrs. Henry Wood, author of "East Lynne," Mrs. Margaret Hosmer, Amanda M. Douglas, Burr Thornbury, Ella Wheeler, August Bell, Clio Stanley, Captain Carnes, Lillie Devereux Blake, "Zig," Mrs. Fanny R. Fendge, Mrs. M. L. S. Burke, Eben E. Rexford, etc., etc., etc. ☞ It will be entirely NEUTRAL in politics.

NEW NOVELETS CONSTANTLY PUBLISHED.

New Novelets and Stories, long and short, are being continually published. Subscriptions, therefore, can begin at almost any time.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

As our enlarged paper will afford us the room, we shall devote about a column in every number to a summary of the most important and interesting news of the week.

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SINGLE COPIES 6 Cents.

☞ Tobacco users will please notice that a Mrs. Chloe Flatford, of Fredericksburg, Va., has just died from the excessive use of the weed. Having smoked and chewed for one hundred years, her constitution was ruined, and she died a victim of bad habits at the green age of one hundred and eighteen years.

THE

SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JAN. 27, 1872.

BACK NUMBERS.

We have still on hand back numbers to the first of the year, containing the early chapters of "The Swamp Outlaws," &c.

A NEW NOVELET.

In this week's paper we commence a new novelet, entitled

SEVEN GRAVES;

OR,

THE HEIRS OF DUNLEATH.

BY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

This is a picturesque and fascinating story, and will, we think, afford great pleasure to our readers.

LOW-NECKED DRESSES.

The fashion of low-necked dresses, and what is called "square-necks," has become universal. There are reasons *for* as well as reasons *against*. Some persons have beautiful shoulders and arms, though it must be said that in America such beauties are few and far between. Let these wear low-necked dresses; they have some excuse for it.

But oh! in the name of all that shocks the esthetic sense! why, why do women and girls whose necks are *scraggy*, whose arms are *ditto*, wear dresses that expose those infirmities to the public or to the social gaze?

Why are these necks and these arms not suppressed in the sympathetic bosoms of the family of the sufferers?

Bones are not beautiful. The ideal is not a skeleton.

Then, in the neck question, there is another phase. *Don't overdo it.* Do not expose yourself to such remarks as the Spanish envoy made about the celebrated and beautiful—such she certainly was—Miss K——. (I refrain from filling out the name.) What did the envoy say, you ask? He said, when asked how he liked Miss K——, "*I have seen quite enough of her.*"

And yet, let me assure you, nothing more beautiful than Miss K——'s neck and bust was ever seen anywhere by anybody. But—*she overdid the thing!*

Again: This was at a ball at the house of Madame R——h once—she is no longer living—the head of *the grand monde* in Philadelphia. A lady entered who was as noted for her beauty as any New York belle has ever been. She possessed a beautiful person. Her shoulders were white and soft as satin, her arms of irreproachable contour. Yet Judge P——, the noted wit, when asked by his daughter Sarah what he thought of the beauty's appearance at that particular ball, replied: "Sallie, it's '*neck or nothing.*'"

I will not recall, as many have done, the beau who declared that he had never seen such a sight—this was at the opera in London—since he was *weaned*. I pass him over. But I do say that there is no triumph in being the subject of such remarks as these.

I do not say, "Let low-necked dresses be abolished." They have long been the distinguishing feature between evening and day attire. But I *do* say, I *do* urge that American belles, at least, should have the good sense never to go beyond certain limits.

The square-necked dresses are less open to comment (I do not mean to pun); but some of them are rather too—what shall I say?—*too much so.*

There is a wisdom in a certain degree of mystery. And there is a wisdom as great—oh, let me urge it!—in *not* uncovering the neck to the autumn breezes, which, in some instances, become gales. The delicate skin cannot bear, without bad result, the contact with outer air. I have seen women in the streets *decolletes* to a degree that made me tremble for their health. It is not pretty, and *it is very bad style.*

I will not close till I say that if the scrawny necks be homely, the red, coarse, *beefy* necks are *horrible.*

And while for the thin necks I recommend tulle, for the beefy necks I strongly recommend *a yard of velvet.*—*Ladies' Journal.*

CUPID'S DODGES.

The racy correspondent of the *Commercial Advertiser*, Eli Perkins, writes as follows apropos of the gas famine in New York: Last night I went home from Dr. Ewer's with Julia. I felt great confidence in myself. The darkness gave me confidence. It always gives lovers confidence. There were thirty-six dark gas burners, and one tallow candle—one Eighth Avenue tallow candle in her father's palatial mansion. I took her hand; I did, and I was about to say something confidential in the feeble candle-light, when we heard Julia's cousin Mary in the back parlor with Charley Brown. Charley was taking advantage of the darkness too. We saw their shadows on the glass door. I heard him whisper:—

"Mary dear, I have something confidential to tell you."

"What is it, Charley?" she lisped, in a sweet voice.

Then we saw one arm of his shadow encircle her shadow, and somebody whispered:

"I think, Mary—I think that—I love you!"

Then we heard a suppressed sigh.

"Julia," continued the voice, "do you love me?"

"Yes, Charley, I do love you," she sobbed.

"How much?"

"More than words can express."

"I am very glad, Mary," continued the voice, "for I thought you were flirting."

"Well, Charley?"

But Charley never said another word. Young fellows seldom get farther than this, now-a-days. This is as much as any reasonable young lady ought to expect. Now Charley is an honorable, High School fellow, and he has gotten just so far with three hundred and eighty-six different young ladies on Fifth Avenue. It is called by the fellows, the Sticking Point. One day I said: "Charley, did you ever get any farther than the Sticking Point?"

"Pshaw, Eli, yes," he replied. "There are two other points still. We call them the Awful-Oath Dodge, and the Poverty Dodge. Why, I've come these dodges over the Fifth Avenue girls more than twenty times."

"What is the Awful-Oath Dodge," I inquired anxiously.

"The Awful-Oath Dodge is where we get sweet on a girl, tell her that we love her, get her to say that she loves us, then announce with tremendous solemnity that we were compelled to take an awful oath at the bedside of our dying grandfather not to marry until the age of thirty. Of course the young lady can't wait so long as that, and we are out of the scrape.

"Well, what is the Poverty Dodge, and how do you do it?" I asked, still opening my eyes at Charley's revelations.

"Never tell, my boy?"

"Never!"

"Well, I always tell the girls that I love them."

"Yes?"

"Ask them if they love me."

"Yes?"

"Then they say, Yes."

"And you—"

"Why, then, I sigh and say: Alas! darling, I do love you, but I love you too much to ask you to marry me. You, Mary, are used to a life of luxury. I am poor and proud. I would not ask you to leave a home of comfort for a home such as I could give you."

"Well, Charley, how does this generally work?"

"Splendidly, old fellow! That's what we Fifth Avenue fellows call the Poverty Dodge—the very last jumping-off place, you know."

FLIRTATIONS.

In very nearly every clime under the sun flirtations have been indulged in from time immemorial, but perhaps in no age more extensively than our own. Can any one recall a seaside recollection, a ball or party reminiscence, the memory of a day's blithe and careless excursion, or, indeed, any pleasure of like character in which those of opposite sexes participated, unmarked by one or more flirtations. It is somewhat remarkable that even the most desperate flirts will rarely acknowledge themselves guilty of flirting. They denominate this species of amusement under various names, as though the name and not the thing itself oppressed the conscience. The only two classes, however, into which "flirtations" can be divided, are innocent and wicked. What an innocent flirtation may be, we leave for those who understand to define. A wicked flirtation is the exercise of our powers of fascination and of pleasing, with the express purpose of conveying to the mind of a person of the opposite sex for whom we care but little, the assurance that his or her society is particularly agreeable to us. There are a thousand ways of doing this, and every way is wrong. A word, a squeeze of the hand, a gesture of admiration, or, at times, one of impatience, will equally serve, and will send back the blood into the heart a silly girl with a flutter of impatient and tumultuous joy. Both sexes are equally to blame; for this kind of flirtation is a species of lying, and one can lie as well with the eye or the hand as with the tongue. We think it was Bulwer who said in one of his early novels, that "conscience is the most elastic material in the world. To-day you cannot stretch it over a mole-hill, to-morrow it hides a mountain." The first trifling with a human heart occasions remorse; but when once what was the pastime of an hour becomes the pastime of a life, the conscience is cheated into the belief that flirtations are harmless, and unworthy of the denunciations of even those who suffer.

A WOMAN lately looking at a printing-press at work, looked up in the face of her companion, and in a most earnest manner inquired, "Arrah, Tim, an' them's the things as writes the papers? Ba's them what they call editors? Holy mother of Moses! Do Americans abuse each other by machinery?"

IS IT ANYBODY'S BUSINESS?

We do not quote the following stanzas as anything new, but only as containing suggestions worthy of frequent consideration:

"Is it anybody's business,
If a gentleman should choose
To wait upon a lady,
If the lady don't refuse?
Or, to speak a little plainer,
That the meaning all may know,
Is it anybody's business
If a lady has a beau?

"Is it anybody's business
But the lady's, if her beau
Rides out with other ladies,
And doesn't let her know?
Is it anybody's business
But the gentleman's, if she
Should accept another escort
Where he doesn't chance to be?"

Lacking space for the entire poem, we content ourselves with one additional stanza, which contains the "conclusion of the whole matter."

"The substance of our query,
Simply stated, would be this:
Is it anybody's business
What *another's business* is?
If it is, or if it isn't,
We would really like to know;
For we are certain, if it isn't,
There are some who make it so."

GOSSIP FOR LADIES.

THE CITY FASHIONS.

DEAR POST:—Weddings and wedding outfits seem to be the order of the day just now, and for the gratification of your readers it may perhaps be well enough to give a description of some of the *trousseaus* which the privileged few have been able to get a peep at prior to the ceremony. But before commencing at the clothes and the "gingerbread work" that is always lavished in such profusion upon everything that will bear it, it will, mayhap, be interesting to note a few characteristics of the "parties of the first part" immediately concerned in these events.

I think I informed you some weeks ago that it was the fashion this year for youthful aspirants to matrimonial honors to select for partners gentle women several years their seniors. I don't know why they do it, unless they fear they shall miss their mothers, and neither do I know how the experiment works. If there is any trouble, I presume it is the fault of the brides. Taking a boy to bring up is a serious responsibility, and no one should enter into a contract of that kind without grave and prayerful consideration, for be it understood there are very few ladies, even of those who have passed into the "sere and yellow," that have patience and piety sufficient to bear with the freaks and foibles incident to boyhood without losing their tempers. Though now that I think of it, isn't that expression a little paradoxical? I don't just understand why people should be said to *lose* their tempers, when for the most time in their lives, perhaps, they find themselves in the possession of one. Correctly speaking, I suppose a temper may be either good or bad, but when a person does a remarkably kind and gentle act, nobody uses that word in speaking of it, while on the contrary if a man or woman gets up and breaks things, you will be pretty sure to hear it ascribed to temper. But I am off the subject, and will return and be as

"Constant as the northern star,
Of unchanging, fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament."

To resume. One of the most elegant *trousseaus* imported this season was for a lady who forms an exception to the general rule in one respect. She is not young; in fact, she is what might be termed *old*—a widow, fair, fat, and a little over forty, who is to be married to a bachelor at least three years her senior. A little romance is connected with it, which whispered about in fashionable circles gives *eclat* to the affair, and makes it intensely interesting. It seems that twenty years ago or more, when these two were younger than they are now, they met and loved, or *thought* they did, which amounts to the same thing, and would have wedded, only that a handsome fellow with a Grecian nose, a wealth of glossy hair, magnificent eyes and a moustache interposed, and with honeyed words drew her from her allegiance; and when the present incumbent pressed her to say "Yes," she candidly informed him that circumstances over which she had no control were repugnant to the acquiesce.

There was no getting around that, and the ardent youth had to succumb. She married, and a house full of Grecian-nosed sons and daughters rose up and probably "called her blessed." But as Fate would have it the husband grew careless, and among other things neglected to have his vaccination renewed, and in one unlucky day he fell a victim to the destroyer, small-pox. History does not state how the jilted lover spent those years in which his adored was engaged in her sweet motherly cares; he may have pined some, and perhaps had dark, sorrowful moments, but he grew portly and made a fortune and remained single, and now he has his reward. Of course it don't seem just the thing this waiting for the second table, but I've no doubt that that buxom woman, with her one hundred and sixty pounds avoirdupois, seems to him the same etherial creature to whom in the deepening twilight he knelt long years ago; the pretty one who blushed at the gentle pressure of his fingers, and—and—pshaw! I wasn't there, and how *can* I be expected to know all about it?

Anyhow he is whispring "airy nothings" to her again now, and he finds an appreciative listener. She don't meet him in the vine-covered arbor at twilight, and blush and stammer and tremble and turn pale—on the contrary, the colored porter ushers him into a sumptuous parlor, and at the proper moment she makes an entrance, rustling in brocade, and is entirely self-possessed, as becomes a woman of her years and experiences.

But about that bridal *trousseau*! To be sure it had to be talked over between them, and it was agreed that it should be imported, and that no expense should be spared; and then came the "tug of war"—he insisting—manlike, that she should have all the pretty girlish things that would be appropriate for a bride of eighteen, and wear a *decollette* corsage and short, puffed sleeves, and declaring over and over again that she was not a day older in looks than when he first pressed his suit.

It was a delicate position for a woman. She did not like to "go back" on his first request—*recalcitrate* would be less slangy, perhaps—and she could not point out to him the ravages of time. If he thought her still young and beautiful, she, of course, wanted to keep up the illusion as long as possible. If he could not see that the hair over which he raved was of that sort they take off at night, and tenderly away with soft caressing touch, which seems to say: "You cost a power of money, and I must be careful of you," it was not her business to tell him of it. Neither did she care to call his attention to the fact that her complexion was less fresh than of yore, or that the pearly teeth he so much admired were false.

But she was a woman with no nonsense about her, and she was not going to be ridiculous to please anybody: so, with a little manœuvring, she managed to get things exactly to her liking, without seeming to act in direct opposition to his wishes. He was a smart man, and a philosopher, and all of that, but he didn't know a bodice from a bull's eye. So she made out the directions, using as many technicalities as possible, and

he agreed that it was just as it should be, and she was an angel, and couldn't help looking charming if she tried. And so when the trousseau arrived it was all right, and beautiful, and becoming, and will be required some time the present month.

But here I am, near the end of my column, and my letter scarcely commenced. I meant to have given you a full description of those elegant dresses, but you can see yourself that it is out of the question this time. So, with many regrets, I beg to subscribe myself,

Yours, truly, OLIVE KING.

Should Old Acquaintance be Forgot?

MY DEAR POST: For some time past I have felt a strong desire to write to you. This feeling has grown upon me week after week, until it has now culminated and driven me to seize the pen and "go for you." I can no more resist the impulse than I can help liking your good-humored and sensible-looking face. I write now, because I am compelled to think it must be inspiration; I am drawn into it by an incomprehensible influence, I am the victim of a mysterious spell, I expect; but if so, it will doubtless leave me after a *spell*. I will try and write it down. I have said that you attract me, and so you do, I repeat the remark. Perhaps you are my "negative," or my "affinity," or something of that sort. I do not use the word negative, in the photographical sense, but according to its magnetical import. At all events, my pen draws me towards you, and I yield to its influence.

There are two causes for this effect; for in the language of garrulous old Pellonius, "this effect defective comes by cause."

I will proceed to explain the last cause first. In the *first* place, I am indebted to one of your handsome young contributors for the pleasure I enjoy in renewing my acquaintance with you. The young and highly-gifted lady knew just exactly what I needed; and in accordance with her generous orders, the POST comes to me regularly, through the "*I'ost*," and as regularly as the week rolls around, I am able to "*post*" myself as to your doings.

The other cause, is this, I knew you when I was a boy. You used to visit my father's house "once a week," in those long absent days.

I am not a boy any more. Some sharp critic may deny this, but it is a fact, nevertheless. I quit being a boy some time ago. Time would have it so, and I was compelled to submit. You, too, Mr. POST, were much younger, when I first knew you, and "dandled you in my arms." But "how you have grown; I should hardly have known you." That's what astonished old ladies used to say to me, when I shot up into a man.

I remember the "long ago" paper as a very handsome little fellow, full of fun, of song, of sentiment, and other good things. And you, Mr. POST, have not only inherited the talents of your sparkling progenitor, but like the wise son in the parable, have increased them ten-fold. Great changes have come over the world since you and I were young, Mr. POST. We were boys together, you know, and you have grown much wiser, and I much older.

When the fact first dawned upon my delighted heart, that you were in reality my boyhood's playmate, a troop of delicious sensations came trooping back upon me from the dim past like an avalanch of roses; but alas they were soon succeeded by a sombre host of sad memories—memories of the departed ones, of the loved dead, of affectionate parents, and dear friends over whose graves have swept the storms of many mourning years, and of the once happy family group, now forever broken up by death and Time's changes.

But it is better to dwell upon the happier recollections with which your early career was associated. How fresh they are now in my mind, and how softly they rest upon my heart. I particularly remember a beautiful young girl, with whom I used to read the delicious love stories which appeared in your columns. It was a very young love that sprung up between us, but it was just as good as anybody's love, and perhaps purer and sincerer while it lasted, than that which takes hold of older and tougher hearts. I liked it then, and remember it now with a singular sort of pleasure. The memory of it comes "o'er me like the sweet south breathing upon a bank of violets." It came to a violent and premature end—for it was nipped in the bud by the cruel frosts of a Mormon winter. A hypocritical follower of Joe Smith saw her, and doubtless marked her for his own. At all events he devoted his energies to the task of converting her simple-minded and too confiding parents, to the creed of the "latter day saints," and he was too successful, for he carried the whole family off with him to the Mormon rendezvous, which was then located at Nauvoo, Illinois.

But I must dismiss the theme that invokes the reminiscences which come thoat ing over my memory from the "dark abyss of the past." Before dropping the pen, however, allow me to thank you, Mr. POST, for the most disagreeable retrospect, and at the same time acknowledge my obligations to the talented young lady to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of your renewed acquaintance, not the least of which is the opportunity of reading contributions from her graceful as well as poetic pen. I shall endeavor not to drop your acquaintance again.

Yours, gratefully, MEMORY.

VACCINATION.

Vaccination—now so generally practiced as a protection against a terrible disease—was discovered almost by accident. Previous to the year 1796, inoculation was the only known method of diminishing the danger attendant on small-pox; for it was believed that all must have the disease in some way. Dr. Edward Jenner, in inoculating his patients for small-pox, found that many did not take it. Inquiries among the country people developed a common belief among them that those whose business it was to milk cows were seldom afflicted with the disease; and further investigation proved that inoculation did not take effect in those who had accidentally taken "cow-pox." Jenner followed up the idea thus suggested by experiments; but his belief that vaccination—from the cow in the first place, and then from one person to another—would protect against the small-pox, was ridiculed as an absurdity for sixteen years. He persevered, however, and in 1796 vaccinated a boy eight years old with matter taken from a milk-maid's hand. The child recovered satisfactorily, and was immediately inoculated for small-pox, but without the slightest effect. Jenner's discovery then became widely known and practiced.

Although medical opinions vary somewhat in regard to this subject, it is pretty generally agreed that if the protection afforded by vaccination is not perfect, it is superior to any other known; that although the operation, once performed, often fails to afford complete security, yet it generally modifies the disease, rendering it comparatively mild and safe; and many physicians are of opinion that if the virus is thoroughly inserted until it ceases to affect the system, the person is protected *for all time* as effectually as he would be by an attack of small-pox.

A SOMEWHAT juvenile dandy said to a fair partner at a ball: "Don't you think, Miss, my mustaches are becoming?" To which she replied: "Well, sir, they may be coming, but they have not yet arrived."

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP.

In the quiet nursery chambers,
Snowy pillows yet unpressed,
See the forms of little children
Kneeling white-robed for their rest.
All in quiet nursery chambers,
While the dusky shadows creep,
Hear the voices of the children,
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

On the meadow and the mountain
Calmly shine the winter stars,
But across the glistening lowlands
Silent the moonlight's silver bars.
In the silence and the darkness,
In darkness growing still more deep,
I listen to the little children,
Praying God their souls to keep.

"If we die"—so pray the children,
And the mother's head droops low,
(One from out her fold is sleeping
Deep beneath the winter's snow)
"Take our souls," and past the casement
Flits a gleam of crystal light,
Like the trailing of His garments
Walking evermore in white.

Little souls that stand expectant,
Listening at the gates of life,
Hearing far away the murmur
Of the tumult and the strife.
We who fight beneath the banners,
Meeting ranks of heroes there,
Find a deeper, broader meaning
In your simple vesper prayer.

When your hands shall grasp this standard
Which to-day you watch from far,
When your deeds shall shape the conflict
In this universal war—
Pray to Him, the God of battles,
Whose strong eyes can never sleep,
In the warring of temptation,
Firm and true your souls to keep.

When the combat ends, and slowly
Clears the smoke from out the skies,
When the last night's solemn shadow
Settles down on you and me,
May the love that never faileth
Take our souls eternally.

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love is ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers.
Unfaith in aught, is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute
That by and by will make the music mute;
And, ever widening, slowly silence all.

"The little rift within the lover's lute,
Or little pitted speck in garnered fruit,
That, rotting inward, slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping; let it go:
But shall it? answer, darling, answer no,
And trust me not at all, or all in all."

Ashley Moore read the quaint little song of Vivien's over to the girl who sat beside him in the cool and shadowy room, and, when it was ended, a little silence fell about them.

"Trust me not at all, or all in all," she said by-and-by. "Can you do that Ashley? Can you trust me in all?"

"Yes, I think I can," he answered, making a prisoner of her little hand. "I am going to try you at least. I have a good deal of faith in women, and I don't expect you to shake it. I should not like to be another Merlin, deceived by a Vivien."

"Yes, you can trust me," she said, getting up, and going to the window, where she stood looking out for some time. She was thinking over what she could trust him with her secret or not. Perhaps it were safer with herself.

Ashley Moore watched her, smiling complacently. He was proud of this woman he had won—this fair-faced, pure-eyed, Margaret Leigh. He loved her, as he had never loved a woman before. He had seen women with faces more beautiful; women with forms more queenly, and eyes more full of fire and subtle mesmeric fascination, but never one he deemed so pure, so truly womanly.

"Margaret,—a pearl," he said softly to himself, but she heard it, and turned away from the window.

"You are talking about me," she said, smiling down into his eyes. "They say eavesdroppers never hear anything good of themselves, but I'm sure the old saying isn't always true, because it's nice to be called a pearl."

"Give me a kiss then," he said, and Margaret bent down and kissed him on his lips.

"I wonder if this place is haunted? Do you know, Margaret?"

Jessie Wynne asked the question of Margaret at the breakfast table one morning.

"I never heard of its being," was the answer, a little flush coming into the girl's face as she spoke.

"Nor I," said Miss Wynne. "But from what I have seen, I should judge it to be," with a little meaning glance in Margaret's direction.

"Why?" asked some one sitting near. "Have you seen any ghosts, Miss Wynne?"

"Yes, I think I have," she replied. "At any rate, I have seen *something*, which looked like the traditionary ghost."

"When, where?" asked little Miss Sperry, who had a perfect mania for the supernatural.

"Last night, near the old oaks, in the corner of the lawn," answered Miss Wynne. "I was restless, and my head ached, and I got up and sat down by the window. I saw a figure in dark garments, precisely like the orthodox ghost, except the color of its drapery, you see, glide along down the garden, and when it came to the oak trees another figure met it, and they embraced and kissed each other in a very affecting and melodramatic way. It was very light, the moon shining like silver. I didn't know but there might be some old legend that would explain the mystery."

Ashley Moore looked up, and saw that Margaret's face was very pale. She seemed to feel that he was watching her, for she looked toward him, and their eyes met. A swift color suffused her face, and she turned her glance away.

"Did you see the face of either ghost?" asked Miss Sperry.

"I saw the face of the one who went down the garden," answered Miss Wynne. "It resembled you, Margaret—very much, indeed, so much that at first I took it to be you; but I happened to recollect that young ladies were not apt to be wandering around at that time of night, to meet their lovers, and so I came to the conclusion that they must have been ghosts who met at the oaks. I take it that you and Mr. Moore are entirely too sensible, to run the risk of getting neuralgia and influenza, and a cold in the head, by indulging in moonlight interviews."

Margaret did not answer, but her face kept changing from rose-color to white. Ashley, watching her, could not account for her embarrassment, nor understand why Miss Wynne's story, which he took to be one of that young lady's fanciful creations of the brain, should affect her so.

The subject dropped, by-and-by, and he thought but little more about it.

The days went by so rapidly, that he could hardly tell what became of them. It was a gay, glad-hearted little party which was gathered at Leigh Farm, and aside from the cheerful society, love helped to make the hours fleet-footed.

One night the sky became full of clouds, shortly after sunset, and the wind began to blow furiously from the south.

"We're going to have an old-fashioned thunder-storm, I guess," remarked Mr. Leigh, looking out. Even as he spoke, a flash of lightning shot across the night, and was followed by a dull, far-off clap of thunder that presaged the coming storm.

It was a damp, chilly night, and the members of the family retired early.

Ashley liked to watch the storm, and sat down at his window and looked out into the night, which was lit up, now and then, by lightning flashes of intense brilliancy, making the whole scene as light as day.

Suddenly, as a flash of lightning ran across the sky from east to west, he started as if the electric fluid had struck him, and his face could not have been paler if it had.

For, down at the foot of the garden, he saw two forms, a man and a woman—and the woman's face was Margaret's. As he looked he saw the man bend down and kiss her, and then the light died out as suddenly as it had come, and all was darkness.

False! Margaret false! He could not believe it—and yet he could not doubt the evidence of his own senses. And he had believed her to be a woman whom he could trust. Could he trust her now, after what he had seen?

Suddenly a line or two from the poem they had read together, came back to him:

"Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all."

She had shaken his faith in woman, because she had been to him the representative woman. He could not trust her, for she had deceived him. He would ask no explanation of what he had seen. He would tell her that he knew how faithless she was, and go his way, and try to forget her. As if love could forget so easily.

The next morning he met her in the parlor. They were alone.

"I am going away," he said. "I saw Miss Wynne's ghosts, last night, Margaret."

She turned pale, and lifted her eyes to his in a mute appeal. The look touched him—but he hardened his heart against it.

"After seeing what I saw, I cannot linger here. I wish I had never seen you, Margaret. It would have been better for both of us. But—good-by."

He turned to leave her.

"Stop," she cried. "Let me explain. You think me faithless—but I am not. Let me tell you the meaning of what you saw."

"Don't attempt to explain it," he said, coldly. "I saw enough to prove how false you were; and I will not listen to you. You remember the story of Vivien and Merlin, don't you? So Vivien shall deceive me in the way she deceived him."

And then he left her, with one last glance toward her as he crossed the threshold. Her face was white as death could ever make it. Her eyes were full of dumb entreaty.

"I am innocent," she cried. "Oh, Ashley, if you love me, listen to me."

But he would not listen.

Years afterward he was crossing a western prairie; when night overtook him he was near a small cabin. He stopped and asked if he could find shelter there. His request was granted by the only inmate of the cabin, a man of about his own age. As he led his horse to a spring near by to drink, he passed a small grave, and stooped down to read the name roughly carved on the pine board at the head.

"MARGARET LEIGH, Aged 21."

"Margaret Leigh! My God! can it be the Margaret I knew?" he said, with a regretful memory stirring in his heart. In all those years he had not forgotten her.

After supper he asked his host about the grave.

"It is my sister's grave," he answered.

"I knew a woman by the name of Margaret Leigh, once," he said. "But the woman I knew, lived at the East."

"My sister came with me from the east," said his host. "What is your name?"

"My name is Moore, Ashley Moore."

"My God! you are the man who broke my sister's heart!" The man came quite near Moore in the twilight, and saw how pale he was. "Let me tell you how you wronged her. I was her only brother, and had got into trouble, and my father had turned me out of doors, and threatened to send Margaret after me if she ever spoke to me. But she disobeyed him, and tried to help me. I met her often after my father and the rest of the family were asleep. You saw her and me together one night, and believed her false. She never got over the wrench you gave her heart. Father found out that she had disobeyed him, and she came away from home with me to avoid his displeasure. She said she wanted to die, and she *did* die. I think your heart must reproach you when you think how cruelly unjust you were to her. She loved you, and the thought that you believed her false and unfaithful killed her."

All night long a man paced up and down beside Margaret Leigh's prairie grave. When morning came it found him lying there beside it, and his face was wet, but not with dew. There were other drops upon the violets and creeping mosses than the drops of the night dew.

"Oh, Margaret, forgive me!" he said, brokenly, and put them a violet whose leaves had begun to unclose burst suddenly into perfect bloom, and in some way he felt that her spirit had come near him and spoken forgiveness to him through this little flower. He broke it from its stem, and to-day, wherever he may be, he carries with him the violet he gathered on the grave of the only woman he ever loved.

DO SOMETHING.

You, do something; don't fold your hands complacently and sit in idleness. Don't throw yourself upon that inviting easy lounge, with a novel in your hand, prepared for a day of lounging. Don't sit there before that blazing fire, dreaming of the past. Don't waste hours, days, weeks, and months in doing nothing.

Wake up! wake up! have you no ambition, no hope, no energy, no purpose, no aims? If you have not, God pity you, for we cannot; we can only despise you, to think you are sunk so far beneath what the master intended you to be.

In the name of common humanity, we call upon you to do something!

What, if you are rich and can live without work; is it necessary that riches should make you dawdle away your lives in idleness and unholy dissipation? If so—then, better be poor.

If you wish the esteem of your fellowmen, if you wish self-respect, if you wish your life to be something more than an utter failure—go to work and do something.

Nothing good or great was ever accomplished with folded hands. Shake off your drowsiness and resolve to do something.

☞ A small bull-pup and a Newfoundland dog were engaged in a long fight near the Lakeview (N. J.) depot on the Erie Railway, one day last week. The battle would undoubtedly have ended in a draw had not the little dog pulled his antagonist on the track, and held him there until a train came along. The little dog crouched down, and the train went over him without hurting him, while the big dog was ground to sausage meat. Affidavits can be produced to prove this assertion from the Erie Railway agent of that station.

☞ A Newport swain received a love letter sixty-seven pages long.

MINE AND THINE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY BEULAH.

Mine was a vision,
Of sheltering love:
Thine, a pale finger
Pointing above;
Mine a wild longing,
An aching unrest,
A fluttering yearning
For love's dear home-nest.
How fondly I loved him!
How fast my heart beat!
When I heard on the threshold,
The sound of his feet.
My face turned with blushes,
Then grew deadly pale,
I felt in his presence,
So helpless and frail:
The touch of his fingers
Was exquisite bliss,
I shook like an aspen,
In breath of his kiss:
Oh! God, Thou wast merciful!
Giving to me,
Once in a life-time,
Love's ecstacy.
To love like a woman,
Is better by far,
Than love like an angel,
Or shine like a star.
I thank Thee, dear Father!
That this joy was mine,
My soul drank so freely,
Love's life-giving wine.
The goblet is broken,
The wine overflowed,
The love though so freely,
Was vainly bestowed.
I listen no longer
For coming of feet,
Live in a memory
Surpassingly sweet.
My way was illumined
With love's wondrous light;
Faint feel through the darkness
And shadows of night,—
Yet dull eyes grow brighter,
And sad hearts are gay,
Because my dear Father
Has led me *His* way.

What Could He Do?

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY ELLA WHEELER.

Nell Blynn walked under the graceful locust trees that were bending with their weight of brown pods. Such a little time ago these pods were fragrant with blossoms. Such a little time! she could scarcely believe that the summer had gone.

Never had a summer been so short before in all her seventeen years.

She looked up the road with dreamy eyes. A cloud of dust was coming down, and she could see something shine and glisten in the autumn sunshine like carriage wheels. She turned away, not caring to watch it. Lucius Nowell would not be coming back in a carriage, for he went away an hour before on foot. And it had come to that pass that Nell Blynn cared little for the going or coming of any one save Lucius Nowell.

She left the shadow of the locusts, and was crossing over the smooth meadow toward the farm-house. The carriage whirled down the road, paused just long enough to allow one of the occupants—a young man—to leap out, and then whirled on again.

The young man was slender and graceful in figure, and dressed in the height of fashion. Indeed, this young gentleman's almost foppish fastidiousness in dress would have been looked upon as a fault by some people. His face was handsome as far as regular features, fine complexion, and curling blonde hair could make it.

He saw the graceful figure sauntering across the meadow, and with a few agile bounds, neared her side. She turned with a pretty start of surprise.

"Why, Mr. Nowell, how you frightened me. And where did you come from? I have been watching for you, and did not see you coming."

Mr. Nowell smiled down in the sweet young face.

"I rode down from the village with Mr. Rogers, the insurance agent, who happened to be coming this way. And so you watched for me, did you?"

"Why, yes," Nell answered frankly, blushing a little under his ardent gaze. "I always watch for you when you are gone."

They had reached the big maple tree that stood just west of the house, and the young man sat down upon a rude bench placed beneath it, and motioned Nell to take a seat at his side.

"And what makes you watch for me?" he continued after she was seated.

"I am sure I don't know," Nell answered, whipping her dress with a limb of willow. "I never asked myself why. But I suppose I do it because I am lonesome when you are away."

"A very good answer!" laughed Mr. Nowell, not taking his earnest gaze from her face, "but what makes you lonesome when I am away?"

"Because I miss you," Nell replied, flushing deeper at every question.

"And what makes you miss me?" her persecutor continued, determined to make her commit herself.

"Because you are very agreeable company when here, and have made a summer very pleasant that would otherwise have been lonely, and I enjoy your society. That is all."

"All?" he questioned, leaning toward her, so that his breath touched her cheek. "Oh, Nell, surely that is *not* all!"

He had one of her hands in his, and Nell did not draw it away.

"What more should there be, pray?" she said without looking up.

"Why a good deal more than such frigid regard as you mention, if your sentiments correspond in any degree with mine. You must do more than enjoy my society—you must do more than *like* me, Nell, you must *love* me!" He spoke warmly and earnestly, his blue eyes burning down upon her face. Her young heart bounded for a second, and then seemed to stand still with an intensity of joy that was almost pain. They were the first words of love she had ever listened to, and *he* was her first lover.

She did not answer, and he spoke again.

"Can't you, Nell, can't you love me a little if you try?"

She looked up shyly.

"There is no need to try," she whispered. "I love you already."

There was no one near, and the trees hid them from view as he lifted the blossom-like face with one hand, and kissed her on the lips.

"Dear little Nell," he whispered, but the words she had a right to expect he did not speak.

"Dear little girl, my little Nell," he said again the next day, when he came face to face with her in the narrow hall. And he slipped his arm about her waist, and kissed her again. Still not a word of what a woman has a right to expect when a man has made her confess that she loves him. And in two days more Mr. Nowell would be going back to town.

"How lonely, how very lonely it will be," Nell said, thinking of the dreary days that would follow his departure. She looked off over the autumn hills, and Mr. Nowell felt a very sharp pang in the region of his heart, as he looked at the fair young face. She was the very brightest, purest, freshest young creature that he had ever seen, and he *did* love her. He knew it, too. But, as he expressed it to himself, "Hang it, what could a fellow do.

"You will let me write to you, will you not?" he asked, and his conscience smote him again, as he saw the eager glow of pleasure come into her face at his words. He made up his mind then, that he would not, by word or act, feed the false hope at her heart, during the last two days of his stay; but by his friendly, indifferent manner, would endeavor to undo, in a measure, what he had done. But when the hour of parting came, and the pretty, sorrowful little face was looking up into his, what could he do, but draw her up to his heart, and kiss her again and again, whispering, "Good-by, darling Nell!" While Nell, with tearful eyes, looked up and answered, "Good-by, and don't forget to write. I shall only be happy now, in reading and answering your letters."

Mr. Nowell whirled city-ward, in an uneasy state of mind. "Hang it," he muttered, "I had no business to go so far, but I *did* love the little girl, and I would sooner make her my wife than any woman I ever saw. But it would never do, and I know it, and I'm not fool enough to rush headlong into folly, for a pretty face. But I'd no business to encourage her so, and I must end it in my first letter. It will come hard, at first, but she'll get over it in a year or two." And with this happy conclusion he turned his mind to pleasanter themes.

Burr Chatham, junior member of the firm of Groves and Chatham, Attorneys-at-law, sat alone in his office, pouring over some musty documents, when somebody ran lightly up the stairs, and knocked at his door: and to his "come in," the door opened, and Lucius Nowell walked in.

The young men shook hands warmly, and Burr threw aside the musty documents and fell to chatting with his friend. For, you see, Lucius and Burr had been class-mates, and room-mates, in days gone by, and both were scions of law; but while Lucius played at his profession, and lived on the interest of his fortune, Burr was obliged to work early and late, in his dingy office; and many a midnight hour found him bending over his books.

"And so you are back?" he said. "And now, after your summer's rest, what do you propose to do?"

"Well," Mr. Nowell answered, lighting a cigar with a thoughtful air, "I don't know. *Life* is becoming decidedly monotonous, and I must vary it in some way. The summer has been pleasant, but it has come to an end, like all pleasant things. The winter will have its usual round of gayeties, I suppose, but I am tired of them all. I want a change of some kind, and I think I'll get married, if I can find a suitable party who is willing."

"That is a very good idea," laughed his companion, "for a fellow in your position, and I wonder you have not thought of it before."

"I have thought of it," responded Lucius, "but the trouble has been, I could not find any desirable young lady who would think of it too."

"That will do to tell, but you see I know better," retorted Burr. "There's at least half a dozen nice girls among your acquaintances who would marry you to-morrow, if you asked them to. No, not to-morrow, but just as soon as they could prepare a bridal outfit. For instance, there's Miss Hunt."

"She has a turned-up nose, and red hands." Mr. Nowell answered.

"But she's pretty, nevertheless, and a down-right sensible girl, besides being an heiress. Then there's Lena Wilson. She always thought a good deal of you, Lute; and she's called a regular beauty."

"But she puts musk on her handkerchief, and grease on her hair," responded Lute. "Two things I could never endure."

Burr Chatham indulged in a healthy roar of laughter.

"Well, you *are* particular," he ejaculated. "Why half the fellows in town are in love with her. Well, there's Miss Bennington, and Miss Peters. How about them?"

"Miss Bennington is three years my senior, and Miss Peters's father is bankrupt. I must marry *well*, you know, if marry I do."

Then you don't propose to be influenced by *love*, in the matter?" Burr queried.

Mr. Nowell's face took an absent expression, and he was silent for a moment.

"No," he said, at length. "It won't do for me. If I married for love, I should marry a little girl I met down in the country. She was a regular little beauty, and quite refined, and all that; and I fell in love with her, and she with me. It was a confounded blunder, on my part, but I couldn't help it. It was a blunder, too, all the time, but hadn't sense enough to keep out of it. I made her confess that she loved me, and gave her a few kisses, that will be a delicious memory all my life. I was wise enough to make her no promises, except a promise to write to her, however."

Burr Chatham was listening, evidently much interested in his friend's story.

"And have you written?" he asked.

"Yes, once. I wrote a few days ago, and the poor girl has received the epistle by this time, no doubt."

"Why poor girl?"

"Because, in that letter I told her that I could never be more to her than I am now—that I loved her, but should probably never see her again, as our stations were so different, and bade her forget me as soon as she could."

"Lute Nowell, did you do that?" A look of fine scorn came into Burr Chatham's eyes, and the same scorn, mingled with indignation, sounded in his voice.

"Why, hang it, yes! I had to! what could a fellow do?" Lute asked pathetically. "I had made one blunder, and I had either got to get out of it, or make another. So I chose the former. It came hard to write that letter, and it will be hard for her, when she reads it. I really did love the little girl, and she loved me. But it wouldn't do at all, to marry her. She is a farmer's daughter, and a poor, obscure farmer, at that. She will have nothing but her pretty face and pure heart to bring to a husband. Now, you must see, that it wouldn't do at all, for me to marry her. I must marry well; my wife must come of a good family, and must bring a comfortable little fortune along with her. I hope you see it as it is, old fellow?"

"What is this little country girl's name?" Burr asked, evading his friend's question.

"Blynn: Nelly Blynn." Lute responded. "A pretty name, isn't it? I used to call her Nelly Bly."

An odd light shot into the young lawyer's eyes. "What is her father's first name?" he asked, quietly. "Do you know?"

Lute looked up in surprise. "Why, yes; it is Duncan, I believe; Duncan R. Blynn, as he writes it. What makes you ask?"

"Oh, the name sounded familiar, when you first spoke it, that was all," Burr answered, carelessly. "I was thinking I had heard it, somewhere, before. Where do they live, these Blynns?"

"An old light shot into the young lawyer's eyes. "What is her father's first name?" he asked, quietly. "Do you know?"

"An old-time, out-of-the-way place, called Elmtown, some eighty miles from here; two miles from Bay station. I own a little piece of land down there, the way I happened to go; and as I intended spending the summer in the country, concluded to stay there. I met this little Blynn girl, the first day of my arrival, which, perhaps, was one great inducement to stay. Heigho! well, it does a fellow good, I suppose, to fall in love, once in his lifetime, and I don't believe I ever should have experienced that feeling, unless I had met that fresh, pure, young creature. She was so different from our city girls, Burr, who are old women at twenty. But I must be going, old fellow. I have wasted quite enough of your valuable time. Besides, I have an engagement in half an hour, so au revoir."

"Good-by," answered Burr, who did not affect French. "Call around and let me know, when you come to any decided conclusion on the important marriage question, which I hope will be soon."

"You shall know," laughed Lucius, from the bottom of the stairs, "at the earliest moment possible; and hold yourself in readiness to stand as best man."

Hardly had the door closed upon Lute, and Burr seated himself again at his desk, when it opened to admit the form of Groves, the senior partner.

"There's no use trying," he said. "We can't get any clue, and may as well throw up the case. I have advertised in half a dozen papers, but the trouble is, I don't know *what* ones to advertise in. If the woman, or any of her children are living, they may be in Greenland, or in Texas, or heaven knows where. It is exasperating."

Burr had thrown himself languidly back in his chair—and with a half smile, was waiting for his excitable partner to finish.

Mr. Groves saw the smile.

"And you wish me you were looking at me in that way for?" he demanded. "You know I don't like to be made fun of."

"I was only waiting for an opportunity to communicate an important piece of information," Burr responded. "Which is nothing more nor less, than that I have discovered the abiding place of one Duncan R. Blynn, since you left the office an hour ago."

The excitable Mr. Groves leaped full two feet from the floor, at this announcement.

"You don't say so!" he ejaculated. "Why how, when, where! tell me all about it."

"I will if you will give me the chance," laughed Burr, and he then proceeded to tell his partner young Nowell's story.

"I dared not question him much," he said at the conclusion, "lest I should arouse his suspicions: and if he should discover that there's money in the question, and that the girl would come in for a share, he would marry her, or at least engage himself to her upon the spot—I feel sure, for he fancies the girl, and she loves him. He has acted a villain's part—and he ought to be punished for it. If this is the family, as I hope it is—and if this girl is the oldest child, as she must be, according to dates—she has a princely fortune coming to her; and when it is too late, Mr. Nowell shall be apprised of it."

Burr Chatham left town on the first Southern bound train, early the next morning. There were some hours of waiting, for trains to connect, and it was afternoon before he reached Bay Station. There he left the train, and inquired of a conveyance and found he could be obtained to take him to the house of one Duncan R. Blynn, two miles distant, in Elmtown. After some little difficulty the desired conveyance was found, and he was on his way.

It was just three weeks from the day that Lucius Nowell had said his tender good-by to sweet Nell Blynn. She was thinking of that, as she stood by the window looking out with dry, mournful eyes upon the dreary autumn scenery.

Poor little girl! she had struggled bravely to be strong since the receipt of that dreadful letter, but the aching pain seemed to gnaw sharper in her heart every day—and all the bloom and beauty in life seemed lost to her. She heard the tramp of horses' hoofs, the roll of wheels, and a vehicle paused at the gate; and a stranger alighted and came up the path. The very handsomest man that Nell had ever seen. Tall, full-chested, broad shouldered, dressed with careless elegance, his bearing that of a king's—or what Nell imagined a king's would be. His face was strong and handsome, his eyes dark, and full of fire, his mouth concealed by a glossy black moustache. All this Nell saw as he came up the path and knocked at the door. And it was the most melodious voice she ever heard, that asked her if "Mr. Duncan Blynn resided there." He did, and he was at home, and if the stranger would be seated, she would speak to him.

Five minutes later, the handsome stranger introduced himself as "Burr Chatham, Attorney at Law," to farmer Blynn.

"I have come on business of importance," he said, "and if I am on the right track, I will dismiss my driver and send him back. Otherwise I will return with him. In order to determine that point, I must ask you, what may seem at first an odd question. Did you marry a young lady by the name of Helen Hartwell, daughter of Horace Hartwell, of Canada."

"I did," Mr. Blynn responded.

Mr. Chatham stepped to the door, and gave the man at the gate orders to drive back to Bay Station.

"And now," he said, as he came in again, "one more question. Is that lady living?"

"No, sir; she died more than twelve years ago."

"And was the young lady whom I saw on my entrance, her child—her eldest child?"

"Her eldest, and only child," Mr. Blynn responded. "I have since married again, and have more children—but Nell is the only child by my first wife."

"Then," said Mr. Chatham, "I have a very pleasant piece of information to impart. Your daughter, Miss Nell, upon her eighteenth birth-day, will come into possession of property valued at three hundred thousand dollars, and yearly increasing. Your wife's father, sir, whom it seems objected to her marriage, and consequently, lost all track of his daughter, died last year, and willed all his property to his daughter Helen, wife of Duncan R. Blynn, if living, and if deceased, to her children, if any; otherwise it was all to be given to a certain college.

"It so chanced, that my partner, Mr. Groves, was a friend of your wife's father, and drew the will for him, several years before his death: and since his death, has exerted every energy to discover the whereabouts of the heir, or heirs. He was just upon the point of despairing, when, by accident, I found out what he had so long and laboriously striven to find, and consequently I was made bearer of the good news.

It was late before the Blynn family retired to rest that night, and sleep did not visit the eyes of Nell till just at dawn. For the first time in three weeks—nay, three months—Lucius Nowell was absent from her thoughts for several consecutive hours. The thoughts of this wonderful fortune crowded him entirely out, and even when she fell asleep and dreamed, it was a glowing dark face with shining dark eyes and glossy black hair that figured in her visions, instead of Lucius Nowell's blonde countenance. Mr. Chatham remained until the next day, and when he went away it was all settled that Nell should be sent away to a fashionable female college in just one month, and remain there three years. Mr. Chatham had suggested this, and some persuasion had been necessary to induce Mr. Blynn to view the proposition favorably; but with Nell on his side, they soon won the old gentleman over.

So Nell went to college, for months to be haunted by glowing black eyes, and Burr went back to his office and applied himself closer than ever to his work and his books, until at length nearly all the difficult cases were handed over to him by his partner, who would say, "I am getting old, Burr, and my brains are rusty. Yours are young and well oiled, and can do the work much better than mine."

So in all the city there was not a lawyer who stood higher in his profession, or whose future promised more than Burr Chatham's.

"Why don't you marry, Burr?" his friends said, and Burr could not answer understandingly.

"I don't know," he would say, "unless it is because I haven't time to think about it."

But always when he *did* think of love or marriage, the fairest and freshest of young

faces would rise up before him with sweet, dusky eyes, and a red, warm mouth, and he would breathe a long sigh, for what reason he could not tell, and dismiss the thought and the vision.

Lucius Nowell decided upon travel, instead of marriage, to vary the monotony of his life, and accordingly at the close of the winter season set out for Europe. It was two years before he returned, and he had been to India and Australia, and had bronzed his fine complexion, but looked handsomer than ever. He had seen a great many beautiful women during those two years, and might have made one or two brilliant matches; but somehow whenever he turned his thoughts seriously to marriage the face of Nell Blynn would rise before him, and bring a dull ache to his heart. He really had loved the girl, there was no doubt about that. Still he was as ambitious and proud as ever. He felt that he had followed the proper course, and fancied himself quite a hero for doing so. "Many a fellow would have rushed headlong and married her, and then regretted it forever afterward," he told himself.

The night after his return there was a ball at Mrs. Le Ruth's, an old friend of his. Burr Chatham had informed him of the event, and the two young men were to attend in company.

"You will be the lion *of* this evening, Lute," Burr said to his friend as they approached the lighted mansion. "But few know you are back, and it will be quite a surprise. Mrs. Le Ruth will feel herself quite fortunate in having a lion and a lioness at her ball. There's a beautiful young heiress, a student from the female college, who graduates in July, spending the vacation at Mr. Grove's, her guardian. She is to be at the ball to-night; indeed it is mostly given in her honor, as Mrs. Le Ruth has fallen quite in love with the young lady. She is really very charming, and you must prepare to fall in love to-night."

"I'll risk falling in love with a school girl after my experience with some of the most beautiful women of Europe," laughed Lucius.

"But she is nineteen, and not a bit green, and graduates in July, and is heiress to three hundred thousand dollars," answered Burr as he rang the bell.

The door swung open, and the young gentlemen were soon ushered into the presence of the hostess. Mrs. Le Ruth's pleasure knew no bounds when she found that Lucius had returned. "I have been wanting a new lion," she said, "to officiate at my party, and you have come just in time. With two such guests as Mr. Nowell and Miss Blynn my party cannot fail to be a success, can it, Mr. Chatham?"

"Who did you say madam?" interrupted Lucius, without waiting for his friend's reply.

"Oh, I will show you," answered the sprightly hostess, taking his arm, and leading him into the brilliantly lighted hall-room. "There she is—my lioness, over by the window; surrounded of course, but my lion will soon scatter the crowd." And before the young gentleman could collect his confused ideas, he was hearing his hostess say: "Miss Blynn, Mr. Nowell; Miss Blynn, this young gentleman has just returned from the Cannibal Islands, and no doubt can entertain you with bits of his experience; please take charge of him, while I see to my other guests."

And the most dazzling beauty, with Nell Blynn's sweet face, but the dress and air of a stylish belle, was saying—"I believe Mr. Nowell and I are old acquaintances. Surely, you have not forgotten Nell, Mr. Nowell?"

In all his life, Lucius Nowell had never appeared so awkwardly. He was taken so completely by surprise, that he knew not where to turn, or what to say.

"No, surely not: but how—why—I really am taken quite by surprise at meeting you here," he stammered.

Miss Blynn laughed softly, and answered easily: "And it is quite an unexpected pleasure meeting you, Mr. Nowell. How long ago that pleasant summer seems. And you have been wandering, I understand?"

"Yes; I have spent the last two years in foreign lands. But really, I am so filled with wonder at meeting you here, that I must beg you to explain a little, right now."

Miss Blynn laughed, lightly. "Why haven't you heard?" she said. "I have come into possession of a fortune, since you used to know me. Mr. Grove is my guardian, and I occasionally spend a vacation at his home. I am a student at the Female College—shall graduate the coming summer. This is vacation week, and that is how I happen to be here."

How easy her manner was. How beautiful her face; how unconscious her expression. Had she forgotten the past?

Lucius Nowell brought all his store of fascination into play, that night. He let his wonderful blue eyes dwell long and admiringly upon Miss Blynn's fair face; he gave her hand as meaning a pressure as he dared to, and hung over her with lover-like devotion. But he never once, during the long evening, brought a blush to her face, or an unusual glow to her eye. She treated his compliments and his attentions just as she treated half a dozen other moths who fluttered about her.

Burr Chatham, who watched the two through the whole evening, without seeming to do so, could scarcely conceal the triumphant joy at his heart. "And I wonder what makes me take such an interest in the affair," he mentally soliloquized "Probably because I like to see villainy punished, and am glad that Miss Blynn has so far forgotten the past, that she can meet Mr. Nowell in this provokingly indifferent manner."

Mr. Nowell gave Miss Blynn what most young ladies would have called "a killing glance" at parting, and held her hand longer than was necessary; and, oh joy, she did not withdraw it, nor even look displeased. He went home in a trance of joy.

"I declare it is strange, old boy," he said to Burr, "how things turn out in this world. Surely there *is* a divinity that shapes our ends."

Burr did not answer, scarcely heard, for he was thinking of a few simple words that had been spoken to him by the sweetest lips in the world, that night, and wondering if there was anything in them. They were only: "I am glad you have come—Mrs. Le Ruth heard you were out of town, and I was afraid I should not meet you again before I went back to school."

Very simple words, perhaps only uttered out of politeness, but they made his heart very warm.

"And I shall not see her again for three months," he sighed.

"Not so Lucius Nowell. Not a fortnight passed that did not see him in the reception-room of the Young Ladies' College, waiting for the appearance of Miss Blynn, who always came in the most bewitching of toilets; and, as it seemed to him, more beautiful every day. He never had spoken of the past—he had not the courage to, somehow; and though she often referred to "those old days," it was in a manner not calculated to break the barrier of reserve, but rather to build it higher.

And so the days went by, and Miss Blynn graduated with the second honor of her class. The large hall was crowded, and perfect silence reigned while she delivered the beautifully-worded "Salutatory address." At its close, a shower of boquets fell at her feet. An exquisite nosegay caught in the puffs and folds of her dress, and as she took it in her hands she saw that a note was fastened in the centre.

She wondered what was in the note and who had penned it, and her fingers ached to unfold the delicate cream-tinted paper. But it was full two hours before the ceremonies were concluded, and she had an opportunity to read her note alone. The first glance at the bold, handsome penmanship made her heart thrill.

"*Miss Blynn*—Respected lady," she read. "You will no doubt be surprised, but I trust not offended at the words I am about to write. *I love you*; I have loved you from the hour I first saw you in your country home. But I had determined never to speak, lest you should misconstrue my motive. Mature thought and the changes of fortune have altered that determination, however. To-day I stand before men the owner of a comfortable fortune, and able to offer you wealth with my hand; and I know that your noble heart will not accuse me of unworthy motives in thus addressing you. I love you, and I have never loved any other woman before you. I know it seems presumptuous, but I want you for my wife. I do not ask an immediate answer. You are young, and life is before you. You will see many new scenes and people in the next two years, in that time you may find one whom you could respect and love more than you could ever love and respect me. But if at the end of those two years you *do not* find such an one, I beg you will let me *speak* the words I write to-day, and let me try to win your love. I would not try to win your heart now, before you have seen more of the world, but would rather wait and bide my time.

"BURR CHATHAM."

Miss Blynn spent a few weeks following vacation at her guardian's. Here Mr. Nowell was constantly at her side. He felt that the time had come for him to speak, and that it was necessary for him to speak *early*, before she was exposed to the charms of more fascinating men than himself. He spoke one evening when they were alone. His little speech had been prepared for weeks.

"Miss Blynn, or Nell, as it used to be, I have come this evening to offer you my hand, heart and fortune. I love you—I have always loved you. I have remained single all these years for your sake. I felt that I could not marry any one but you, and I feel now that my good angel has watched over me. Oh, dear Nell, you surely have not forgotten the love you felt for me in the past, and for the sake of that love forgive whatever I might have done to pain you, and tell me that you love me!"

Miss Blynn listened with interest to this little speech.

"Certainly, my dear sir," she said sweetly, "I *forgive* you for all or anything you might ever have done to pain me, though really I do not remember that you ever did anything of the kind."

"Oh, that cruel, cruel letter, Nell, that I wrote you once! If you could know how I have groaned in agony of spirit over it you would forgive me I know," he interrupted.

"A letter?" she repeated, musingly.

"Oh, yes, I *do* remember getting a letter from you once, but just about that time I was informed of the fortune that had fallen to me, and that so occupied my mind that the letter was quite forgotten. I really do not remember what was in it, as it was so easily forgotten. But loving you is quite another thing."

"Oh, Nell! you *must* give me hope—you surely cannot be so cruel as to cast me off like an old glove? I love you—I worship you, Nell, and I want you for my wife."

"But, my dear Mr. Nowell, that is quite impossible. I like you as a friend very well, but my heart and hand are promised to another."

"Another!" repeated Mr. Nowell, slowly.

"Nell—Miss Blynn, are you betrothed?"

"I love another," Miss Blynn answered, "and there is an understanding between us, which in time will result in marriage. He is generous, and does not wish to hold me to any engagement, but I consider myself bound to him, and my hand will eventually be given to him in marriage, as my heart is already in love."

Mr. Nowell wended his way homeward in a very crestfallen state of mind. The next day he confided his grief to his friend Burr.

"And the mystery of the affair is," he said, "who this lover of hers can be. I cannot imagine for my part."

"Perhaps it is one of the professors at the college," answered Burr. "I saw some handsome ones there."

"I shall never marry until she does," continued Lucius solemnly. "I shall wait until I see her the wife of another, before I relinquish all hope, too. Ah, Burr! I made a great mistake when I gave her up. But, hang it, what could a fellow do?"

Mrs. Le Ruth went abroad, in a few months, and Miss Blynn accompanied her. She did not return for a year Then she came back and spent the winter season in the city, as reigning belle, and then retired to her country home for a few months of rest. And Lucius Nowell was still at a loss to know who the lucky man could be.

He met Burr Chatham, one glorious June day, satchel in hand. "Hello, where are you going?" he exclaimed.

"Down into the country, on a little business; am in a hurry—by-by," answered Burr, hurrying on.

A few days later Lucius received the following card by mail:

"Mr. Burr Chatham..... Miss Nell Blynn.
Mr. and Mrs. Burr Chatham."

For full an hour Lucius Nowell sat and stared blankly at that card. Then he rose up, and sighed, and said, meditatively, "The greatest mistake of my life, by Jove. But, hang it, what could a fellow do?"

OUR MOTHER.

What name on earth can be sweeter than that of mother? How many associations cluster around the heart at the mention of that word? Even hard-hearted warriors have been seen to weep on hearing it casually spoken. All the joys, sorrows, and perplexities of our earlier years are connected with her. We can hardly recall an event of our childhood but which brings with it either her rejoicing glance or an encouraging smile. Nothing gave us more pain when we had done some rash or thoughtless dead, than the sight of her sad look. Many reproofs and lectures might have hardened our hearts, whereas her troubled look spoke "volumes," and made a lasting impression. Then we resolved to do nothing to displease her. Perfectly happy were we, when after performing some act of self-denial, we met her fond approving smile. And in later years, when we are in doubt, to whom do we go for counsel, but to our mother? For we feel that she will never advise us wrongly, and if we follow her counsel it will be hardly possible to err. In joy ever ready to sympathize—in sorrow to comfort and console us. How strong and enduring is the love of a mother! Her heart is ready to break as she sees her child torn from her by the "grim monster, Death," and borne away to the churchyard.

☞ A Brooklyn lady complains that two morning callers spoiled her beautiful new Moquette carpet and a couple of handsome damask chairs, by drawing upon them with their bedraggled skirts hieroglyphics in street mud. She spitefully adds that no women indulge in the dirty habit of wearing trains in the street but those whose pedal extremities cover an inordinate amount of real estate.

☞ A newly-married couple blew out the gas in a Wisconsin hotel, and nearly suffocated.

☞ Interviewing reporters should wear pumps.

RELICS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY ELLA WHEELER.

This is her crochet-work, just as she left it,
The spool, with the needle caught into its side,
And the edging wound up in a neat little bundle,
She had been knitting, the day that she died.

This is her dress, hanging here in the closet,
The last one she hung here, 'twill never be moved;
She wore it the morn of the day that she sickened,
And it constantly speaks of the maiden we loved.

This is her glove, lying here on the table,
Bearing the marks of its fingers, you see;
Just as she tossed it aside, I shall leave it,
It is more than a diamond, or topaz, to me,

This is the last book her eye ever glanced in,
The blue ribbon mark shows how far she had read.
That morn, she was better, she said, and was reading
Aloud; and at dusk, the same day, she wandered.

This is a letter: began, but not finished;
Her head ached, she said, and she laid it aside.
And these little relics, so sacredly guarded,
Are all that are left of the dear girl that died.

THE SWAMP OUTLAWS;

OR,

A SECRET OF TWENTY YEARS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CONFERENCE.

Pete surveyed in dismay the dark countenance glaring upon him. Then an expression of blank surprise stole upon his face.

"Why, mass, I's got no letter.

"None of that. Out with it, or I'll—" The threat was completed by a fierce grasp of the boy's woolly head, that made him yell with pain.

"Fore God, mass, I's got no letter. Here's my pockets. If dere's a letter in dem you can eat me alive, dat's all."

The man, still grasping his hair, thoroughly explored his pockets, but without success. He then proceeded to a more complete search, which did not occupy much time, as Pete's attire was of the simplest. It proved in vain; no letter was found.

His captor stood off and looked at him with astonishment.

"Why, you devil's hound, yer had a letter shure. What did yer do with it?"

"I dunno. Spect I dropped um on de road. Didn't know I had um fore you says so."

The man looked at him a moment, as if tempted to strike him with his clenched fist. Then a sudden light broke into his eyes. Taking a hint from Pete's last speech, he started rapidly round the trunk, and stooping down, grasped the letter, which Pete had adroitly dropped at the moment he was so violently seated.

The boy took instant advantage of this opportunity, and leaping from the log, he crossed the road in two or three long steps, and in a moment was in the shelter of the opposite woods.

When the man rose with a half shout of triumph, and looked for his prisoner, he saw him darting like an arrow through the trees, and just disappearing in a thicket of bushes that lay before him.

With a fierce oath the man grasped a pistol, as if half inclined to send a bullet after the fugitive. Then exclaiming: "Best git. The screeching imp 'll raise the county," he turned and made his way rapidly into the forest.

Pete, however, had no intention of waiting to give an alarm. In a minute he peered out from the cover of his bushes, and saw that the road was clear. Stealthily as a cat he returned, and gliding across the road, darted into the woods on the other side, on the track of his late captor.

Pete's long acquaintance with the woods made him a natural scout. In a very short time he had his eye on the party of whom he was in pursuit. The man was just crossing, with great strides, a piece of open forest at some distance ahead.

Pete's task now became easy. Gliding from bush to bush, and from tree to tree, swift and subtle as a panther, he kept him in sight till he saw him stop just on the other side of a small clump of bushes, where sat another man as if awaiting him.

The boy made a rapid flank movement so as to bring the clump between him and the men, and then darted cautiously forward. Lying flat on the ground he glided like a snake into the bushes, scarcely stirring a leaf as he moved onward.

His progress was necessarily slow, and he could hear their voices for some time before he came near enough to distinguish words. They were seated at a short distance from the bushes, the man he had followed seated next him so as to screen the other from sight. He listened keenly, but could only catch an occasional sentence.

"I'm afraid the old man will suspect, if the boy don't," said a voice that sounded familiar.

"A smart Virginny lawyer, yer say."

The conversation continued for some time in a lower tone.

"To-morrow then, about three. You can take the boat easy."

"Not a bit of trouble."

The men rose and Pete drew back into the bushes.

"Be sure and do your work well this time. It will pay."

"I'd ha' done it well afore, only for that blasted meddler."

"It's all right then. He can't interfere now."

The boy heard the sound of footsteps and cautiously peered out from the bushes. The man he had followed stood there alone, the other having disappeared. He stood for several minutes, then turned and strode off through the forest. Pete had intended following his companion, but this loitering of the other had given him too great a start, and the boy, after several futile efforts to discover the direction he had taken, gave up the search in despair, and struck a bee line for home.

The next day was bright and pleasant, with just enough chill in the air to take off the keen edge of the sunlight.

Mr. Howard walked early over to Burton, and had a long talk with the Squire, Dr. Hamilton, and others, in regard to the propriety of organizing an expedition to enter the swamp, and try and bring the outlaws to bay.

The most of his audience pronounced it useless. Efforts of the same kind had been frequently made, and had utterly failed. The only hope of eradicating them, was to occasionally catch one outside their hiding place, and to give him a short shrift and a stout rope.

Dr. Hamilton dissented from this view, arraying himself, alone, on Howard's side.

It was significant, however, that all those who were old residents of the county, were the strongest in their expressions of dissent to the proposal.

This conference was held in the open porch in front of Squire Judson's residence. As they sat smoking and talking, Mr. Howard caught a glimpse of Pete, slowly advancing along the street, in a manner so different from his usual mode of progression, as to excite his surprise.

The boy was advancing with unusual sobriety of motion, and in a peculiar, slinking manner, as if involuntarily seeking to screen himself from observation.

As he came opposite the porch, he looked sheepishly up, and recognizing Mr. Howard, suddenly stopped, gazing round him with a frightened expression, as if seeking the best direction for flight.

"Come here Pete. What ails you?"

The boy slowly obeyed, his eyes rolling till little more than the whites were visible, and moving as if each foot had been transformed into a fifty-pound weight.

"Let us have it. There has something happened. What is it?"

"I dunno', Mass' Howard. Nothing, I 'spect," stammered Pete.

"Come, Pete, that won't do. You are shaking as if you had the ague. Don't be afraid to say what is wrong."

"I cotched cold last night. I slept wid de door open, an' it's gin me de shakes."

"I'll shake the truth out of you, you black reprobate, if you don't come to the point, soon," growled the Squire.

"The boy has been doing something he is ashamed of. That is evident," said Doctor Hamilton.

"Pete, what did you do with my letter?" asked Howard, a sudden suspicion crossing his mind.

"Yer letter? Oh I got um safe."

"Got it? Didn't you post it?"

"Dat's what I mean. I posted um in me pocket. It were all safe, when—" The boy stammered, and came to a full stop.

"When what?"

"When you give me um."

"Out with it, Pete. You've been up to some devilry, as usual, I see," said the Squire.

The lad continued to stammer and hesitate, letting out, bit by bit, just enough of his story to leave it in an utterly incoherent state. He seemed to dread some punishment, should he acknowledge the loss of the letter.

"Now, Pete, there's nobody going to hurt you, so don't be frightened," said Howard, kindly. "It is plain you have lost the letter. If so, there is no great harm done. Tell us how it happened, and perhaps it may be found again."

Thus adjured, Pete told the story of his capture, and of the robbery of the letter, with his subsequent pursuit of the men.

His hearers looked at each other in surprise. Here was a new complication, a fresh instance of the boldness of the Budd gang.

"What was in the letter?" asked the Squire. "Anything that could give any party an object in intercepting it? Yet interception could not have been the object, as such open robbery would defeat itself. Some one must have an interest in learning what you had written."

"It was a simple business letter, about a matter that no one in this region could know anything of. There are parties whom it would seriously interest, but they are far from here. Still, from the several attempts that have been made upon my life, I think it probable that some distant influence is at work here."

"It is unfortunate that the boy failed to recognize the second party to this transaction," said Dr. Hamilton.

"It's my notion dat I sorter half knowed him," said Pete.

"Who do you suspect?"

"'Spect ain't of no account. Wait till I's sure, an' den I'll tell who I 'spect," said Pete, with sombre dignity.

"Right, Pete," said Howard. "We want something more definite than suspicion."

"But do not the remarks of the ruffians indicate some new scheme of violence?" asked the Doctor.

"It looks as if they had some watery project," said the Squire. "You had better avoid the river, Mr. Howard."

"I am going out this afternoon, at three."

"The very hour mentioned by the ruffians. Is it not risky?"

"Perhaps it is, though I can't see how any danger can arise. And I certainly will not have my liberty of movement abridged, were there ten such gangs, all banded to stop me. I am not reckless enough, however, to run needlessly into danger, and shall have my wits about me sufficiently to guard against any possible peril. That I do not fear any though, you may gather from the fact that Miss Brown is to be my companion. Burton would hardly forgive me for exposing her to any peril."

"Well, I can't see, myself, any likelihood of danger, so I give you *carte blanche*," said the Squire. "If there is any peril, it will be from the bright eyes of your comrade, and you must fight against them yourself. We can give you no assistance."

In the further course of the conversation, it was decided that this new outrage necessitated that some action should be taken, and justified Howard's projected excursion to Lumberton.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE RIVER.

A slight ripple marked the shining surface of the river, as Howard, with a movement of the oar, sent his boat out into the stream. Miss Nellie occupied the stern, her eyes bright with anticipation of enjoyment.

The wind was variable, now scarcely moving, now blowing in quick puffs. In certain angles of the river, the bushy shore protected the water from the breeze, and the stream lay in utter placidity. In other reaches, slight waves curled before the changeful wind.

Reaching the middle of the river, he turned the boat's head up stream, and with a physical enjoyment in the exercise, rowed rapidly against the strong current.

For two or three miles they proceeded through a scene of great beauty. The river ran for more than a mile in a straight reach, after which it formed a series of curves, each of them presenting some new and agreeable landscape to the eye. In some places a thick fringe of bushes clothed the river's rim, shutting out all but the tree tops beyond, the sky above, and the flashing water.

Then, the bushes ceasing, long vistas of cultivated fields met the eye, with negroes lazily at work in the warm June afternoon, and picturesque, straggling farm-houses, half hidden by trees, dotted here and there over the landscape.

Now and then some heavily-laden sloop passed them, slowly making its way down the river, the deck covered with barrels of turpentine, and the sooty crew lying about in every attitude of lazy enjoyment, basking, like lizards, in the warm sun.

Here and there they passed a fishing boat, the fisherman usually extended in an attitude of *Dolce far niente*, lazily feeling his lines. Scarcely a bird was on the wing. The wind had lulled, and all nature lay reposing in a warm summer afternoon rest.

The only active life was that displayed by Howard, as he vigorously plied his oars, making the boat cut a long wake through the yielding waters.

His companion sat, half reclining, in the stern, now and then speaking, but usually lapsed in still enjoyment of the scene.

They thus proceeded for two or three miles, at the end of which Howard shipped his oars, first heading the boat down stream. He came aft, and seated himself by his companion. The current carried them slowly down, his only care being to attend to the rudder.

Just below where they turned, a small cove cut into the river's bank. In this lay a turpentine sloop, partly laden. As they passed it, in their upward course, it lay in perfect repose, with not the semblance of life about it. Drifting past it, on their return, it had suddenly sprung into life. The sail was being drawn up the short mast, and one or two figures were at work raising the anchor.

It struck Howard as somewhat strange that they should prepare to sail without a full load, though a pile of barrels lay out on the shore, as if intended to be rolled on board.

They were soon shut from view by a bend in the river, and passed from his mind at the same instant.

"Is not this delightful?" he said. "The scene is tropical in its warmth and stillness. One might drift thus forever, hemmed in by green winding shores, with the sparkling river below and the glowing skies above, and a new vista of beauty opening at every watery curve. Would it not be charming to drift thus on and on, lapsed in utter repose, heedless of the flight of time, the soul sunken into a Nirvana of enjoyment, all of life and emotion suspended save the sense of perfect happiness?"

"Quite a poetical picture," replied his companion. "There are one or two things, however, which you have forgotten in your day dream."

"What are they?"

"First, it would be well to have company on your long drift; and, secondly, to have dining and supping-stations ashore, where you could occasionally awake from your dream and enter into the solid realism of roast beef."

"Roast beef! Could not your imagination devise some more delicate and ideal viand? When I start on that long journey I shall certainly not take you along."

"I hope not," laughed she. "I think I should prefer to be left ashore among the substantials of life. And would not the shores of Lumber river grow somewhat monotonous? Of course, not in a short period of five or six years; but after two or three thousand?"

"O you indomitable idol-breaker! I am not singing the virtues of active, but of passive pleasure. No sight-seeing excursion, but an unending, living dream. Don't you want to take passage with me?"

"No, indeed! not with you. Why I should not have time to sink into a respectable doze before you would be tired of the whole affair. Before we had gone a mile you would have a line overboard, fishing for crabs."

"And can you conceive of no circumstances that would render such a state not only endurable, but the acme of pleasure? If two loving souls could thus pass on together, each with the aims and all desires merged in the supremacy of love for the other, all the rude attitudes of outer life lost in love's young dream, might not the active man be subdued and my dream be realized?"

"I am not competent to answer. When I have gone through that marvellous experience, called first love, I may be better able to comprehend your idea of dream life."

"Then you have kept your heart as yet fancy free?"

"I hope so."

"Entirely? Have never the wings of love, in some of his flights down this way, thrown their shadow on your soul?"

"Now you are laughing at me, and are certainly talking nonsense," she replied, slightly blushing.

"Laughing at you! I was never farther from it. Love does fly, even over this out of the way region. I have felt his presence. And so have you."

She turned away to hide the deeper evidence of emotion that tinged her cheek.

"Oh, yes," she replied vivaciously, "since you will extort the sweet confession, I am deeply in love—with myself. You see, I know my own virtues better than those of any other, and have naturally fallen in love with them."

"Now that is a libel on your own heart. You, the most unselfish of beings. I know you better than you know yourself, and know that those virtues for which you satirize yourself are a real existence, and that they are the most lovable of virtues it has ever been my good fortune to meet."

"There, you are descending to sheer flattery, and I will have none of it," she cried, hiding feeling behind a display of vivacity. "I will not talk about myself any longer, and will not permit you to dwell on so uninteresting a subject. What a strange discussion we have somehow fallen into this morning! Let us descend to the plain level of common sense, and get out of this misty realm of dream land."

"Why should we? You could start no subject more agreeable to me. I have not known you long, it is true, but I have known you under peculiar circumstances, and—"

"Now I will have no more of it," she exclaimed, playfully laying her hand on his mouth. "If you won't change the subject, you shall not talk at all. Your mouth is closed till you promise."

"I won't promise."

"Then consider the portals of your speech closed," she said laughing, and pressing her hand firmly on his lips.

A sudden shock released him, and nearly threw them both flat. In his interest in the conversation he had neglected to observe their course, and the boat, drifted in shore by a setting in of the current, had struck upon a projecting point. It immediately swung past it and drifted on, stern first.

They were now in the last bend of the winding portion of the river, and the straight reach lay but a short distance ahead.

The wind had strengthened, and was curling the water in fitful puffs, which occasionally died quite away, and then for a moment blew strongly. Just appearing round the last curve, about one hundred yards back, came the vessel they had seen preparing to sail, the waters whitening under her bluff bows.

Righting his boat again, Howard grasped the tiller and lay back as before, in a half-recumbent position, glancing at his fair companion with a warmth of expression that showed there had been more meaning than jest in his late observations.

She, as if fearing a renewal of the subject, plunged into a different vein of conversation, and resolutely persisted in it, despite all his efforts to give it a personal tone.

They had quite forgotten the vessel behind them, forgotten everything, in fact, save the game of wits they were playing. A loud shout from the shore, and a peculiar swash in the water behind them, roused them to a sense of their surroundings. As Howard sprang to his feet a sudden puff of wind almost threw him overboard. Not ten yards distant, and steering directly for them, came the turpentine sloop, driving rapidly onward under the impetus of the breeze.

"Down with your helm there! Do you want to run us down?" he loudly cried, as he sprang forward for the oars.

There was not an echo in answer. No trace of human presence was visible on the sloop. She seemed like some water monster, instinct with life, and rushing ravenously upon them. The crew were apparently all lost in slumber, leaving the vessel to the single care of the helmsman.

By the time Howard had grasped an oar the broad bows loomed directly above them, and the splashing water was hurled into their faces.

Nellie sat, motionless with fear, gazing with dilated eyes and suspended breath upon the cutwater of the vessel, that seemed pointed directly at herself.

Howard planted his oar firmly against the curving bow, but it was hurled from his hand, and himself flung violently overboard. Even in the act of falling, his eyes glanced involuntarily upward, and encountered a dark, scowling face, and eyes that seemed for the moment to glow like living coals, glaring down upon him from the front of the vessel. It seemed a terrible figure-head to the onward-rushing monster, and was photographed on his brain as indelibly as sometimes a flash of lightning will photograph the features of a landscape.

His effort had not been entirely without success. The boat was forced slightly back, so that instead of being struck in the stern, it was struck farther front, the whole forward portion being crushed as though it were an egg shell.

Nellie was hurled overboard, and sank till it seemed to her as if she had gone miles under the water.

An involuntary struggle brought her again to the surface. She had been flung downward so forcibly that the vessel had passed directly over without touching her, and she now rose in its wake, half suffocated with the water.

Howard was already at the surface, gazing vigilantly round, a terrible anxiety marked upon his features. He saw her at the instant of her emergence, and half leaped through the water in his eager effort to reach her.

The sloop passed on, unswerving in her course, as if her crew were unaware of the disaster. But over the stern hung two or three faces, looking curiously down for the victims of their murderous attempt.

Howard saw nothing of this. He only saw the pallid face of Nellie Brown slowly sinking again beneath the surface, and her arms flung wildly upward, as if in a sudden paroxysm of terror.

A cry, in which were mingled fear for her and rage against the murderous face which seemed still glaring above him, burst involuntarily from his lips. But a few yards separated them when she disappeared beneath the surface, the ripples closing above her. Swimming as nearly as possible to the spot, he dived downward, and at a short distance beneath the surface, his hand came in contact with her floating hair.

Reaching down he grasped her strongly by the outstretched arms, and violently treading the water, in a moment emerged at the surface. Her eyes opened as the air again struck upon her face, and with the last effort of animation and the unreasoning instinct of terror, she flung her arms round him, in a tight clasp that bound one of his arms firmly to his side, and left him the use of but one hand. With a full sense of the danger of drowning to which they both were exposed, he struggled violently and with all his strength to break free from this living chain, but in vain. Fear had lent to her arms the vigor of those of a strong man, and the tight clasp in which she bound him paralyzed his utmost efforts.

He remembered, however, even in that moment of violent exertion, that such unnatural efforts of strength were only of temporary duration, and strove with all his powers to keep their heads above water until her rigid muscles should relax. After a few minutes her arms loosened and he succeeded in releasing himself from their grasp.

His struggles to effect this, however, had so exhausted him that he was scarcely able to support her insensible form at the surface, while his efforts to swim soon robbed him of his little remaining strength. He clasped her in his arms in an embrace in which love and despair seemed equally mingled, and together they slowly sank beneath the water, the waves closing above their heads.

With a last effort of despairing strength he fought his way back again to the surface. But he could not long sustain himself with the dead weight of her insensible form pressing him downward. Hardly had he breathed in one long, full draught of life-giving air, than he again sank, clinging her with a last effort of heroic self-abnegation, inspired by the hope that his feeble efforts might at least give her a last chance of rescue.

At this moment a muffled sound broke through the water upon his ears, and he felt his dear but fatal charge drawn vigorously upward from his weakened grasp.

Aroused by a dread of losing her, stronger than his dread of death, he threw his arms firmly around her waist, in an involuntary effort to protect her from some new and unknown danger. He was instantly drawn above water, and, as he gasped for breath, found himself alongside a boat, into which the insensible form of his charge was being lifted.

In another moment he was caught in a powerful grasp, and drawn bodily into the boat.

"A mighty narrow squeeze for life, I take it. A minute more an' it would have been all up." The hearty voice that spoke was that of Solomon Muddle.

As he proceeded to place the rescued pair in as comfortable a position as possible, he continued his soliloquy.

"Mighty lucky I happened to be on the bank, with a boat handy, when them blasted niggers run over you. I'd like to teach the lazy black hounds a thing or two. Yonder they go on jest as careless as if it was an egg shell they smashed."

Having hastily completed his task he resumed the oars and sent the boat spinning ashore with all the vigor of his strong muscles.

In a minute Howard's face relaxed from its momentary rigidity. His eyes opened and he gazed with interest in the face of his rescuer.

"Ha! you're come to agin, Mr. Howard. That's hearty," said Solomon, continuing his exertions. "If only our dead-looking Nellie would do the same now it'd be the happiest minute of my life. She's got youth and strength on her side, that's a good deal, and couldn't have swallowed much water."

"How came you so opportunely on hand?" Howard feebly asked.

"I was standing ashore watching you when the sloop come up. I saw that the sleepy niggers was going to hit you, and I yelled for you to look out. Did you hear?"

"Yes. Your cry saved our lives. We would have been struck directly astern but that I set the boat round a little with an oar." Howard's exhausted strength was rapidly returning. He raised himself from his recumbent posture, and seated himself, though with great effort, just as the boat struck shore.

Solomon fastened his boat, and then, lifting the insensible form of Nellie in his strong arms, bore her ashore towards a negro hut that lay just back from the bank, and whose inmates were running with loud exclamations towards the boat.

"There, stop that," he cried, as he carried her into the hut, and laid her on a rude couch inside, scarcely able to suppress a groan as he gazed on the deathly pallor of her face. "Here, aunty, you've had drowned people in your hands afore. You know better what to do than I can tell you."

"Deed an' I do, honey," cried the old negress. "Dat dear sweet Miss Nellie, I'll bring her back shure. Git out now, leab her wid aunty. I'sbad people was drownded dan dis, an' brung 'em to life."

Solomon left the hut, and the women drove out the two or three men who had collected, and proceeded with rude efforts to recall the suspended life to their patient.

He despatched one of the men, with all haste, to the village for the doctor, and set the other two to assist Mr. Howard ashore. One of the negroes produced a bottle of whisky from which Solomon forced his patient to swallow a generous draught.

"Don't be afraid of it," he said, "It'll do you good. You'll have to work on the strength of the whisky till you get back some of your own."

The hot liquor ran like liquid fire through his veins, inspiring his nerves with artificial strength. After a short rest he found himself able to walk with his usual strength, all his feebleness gone.

"That's clever. You're as good a man as you ever was. Hallo there, aunty, what's the luck?"

"Go way, now. De gal's alive, dat's enuf.

She's pittin' warm. Jest leab me be. I knows wat I's about."

"That's good news, anyhow. Now, Mr. Howard, I'd like to go after that blasted crew, and tie them all up to the mast an' give them thirty lashes apiece. The idea of their sleeping so sound, that they run over you without feeling you, and to sail on without even being wakened."

Mr. Howard looked at him in surprise, forgetting that only himself had seen the vigilant face at the bow.

"The crew! You do not then know the character of the crew that is sailing that vessel? It is such a crew as we have already met, once in the woods there, and again in the swamp."

"The devil!" ejaculated Solomon, starting in astonishment. "Are you sure of this?"

"I saw the face of a man that I could swear was one of the Budds."

"An' just see!" said one of the negroes, pointing, "dey's ran de boat ashore."

Looking they saw that the sloop lay against the opposite bank, about half a mile down the river.

"You stay here, Mr. Howard, and get your strength back. Me and the two boys here 'll take a row down, and see how things are going aboard there. I s'pose the rascals have made tracks for the swamp afore this time."

Entering the boat Solomon set his crew at the oars, himself taking a steering oar, and aided by the strong current they made rapid progress towards the stranded sloop.

As they approached they saw that everything was quiet about her decks. Cautiously climbing the side Solomon found the deck deserted. The shore at this point was covered by a thicket of willows, which joined on to a pine wood that lay beyond, forming a ready avenue of escape for the murderous crew.

His companions, ranging over the sloop, had descended the cabin, and he now heard from them loud exclamations. Hastily descending he found them engaged in untieing two negroes, who lay tightly bound and gagged on the floor.

"Hi, Mass Solomon," said one of his companions, "dis is de crew. Here's Pete and Joe Burns, an' dey's tied tight as wax. Who's bin an' done it, dat's de question."

"How was it, Pete?" asked Solomon of the one of the two who appeared most in possession of his senses.

"We was layin' on de bank loadin'," said Pete. "Leastways we was restin', when dese fellers come and tied us, an' dat's de las we knows till now."

"You don't know who they are?"

"Dey's Budds, dat I'm shure ob. Dere were three ob 'em; jist debils dey was too, an' cussed and swored till dey made my hair stan' straight up."

"If it had made you stand straight up and fight like a man it 'd have been better," said Solomon.

Leaving his two aids to help the released prisoners to get their sloop off the shore, Solomon took his boat and rowed back towards the spot where he had left his rescued friends.

On arriving there he found that Nellie had regained animation through the efforts of the women. The doctor had been there and had given her some invigorating medicine, which had greatly helped her in the recovery of her strength.

A carriage had been sent for, which just arrived as he returned. Nellie was carefully lifted into it, smiling at her unwonted loss of strength. Mr. Howard, on the advice of the doctor, entered to accompany her, and they were driven off rapidly towards her home.

For some time she lay back with closed eyes, as if wishing to avoid conversation. But as they neared the house she turned towards him, a smile of gratitude, or possibly of some deeper feeling, illumining her face, and clasped her hand in his, with a warm pressure, far more significant to him than words.

CHAPTER XVI.

PLANNING.

The next day Mr. Howard went to Lumberton, driving over to the railway station, which was three or four miles away, and there taking cars to the county town.

The murderous attempts upon his life had been so many, and so near being accomplished, that the spirit of revenge as well as the desire to rid the county of a scourge, impelled him to try and organize an expedition, and hunt the swamp through for its villainous inmates.

Nellie had had a good night's rest, and awoke much refreshed, though weak from the strain to which her system had been exposed. She held a levee that morning upon her porch, all her acquaintances in the neighborhood coming in with congratulations upon her narrow escape, and desires to learn the true story, very exaggerated accounts of which had gone abroad.

Sally Price came over early, and ran bustling into the porch, half in tears and half in laughter.

"You're alive yet, that's some comfort, you dear, sweet, disagreeable little thing to frighten me so," she cried, hugging and kissing her friend as warmly as if she had indeed been recovered from the grave. "How could you go and get yourself near drowned when you know that we cannot get along without you?"

"It was not done from malice prepense, Sally. We will have to call it one of the contingencies of life."

"A contingency, eh? Well, one name is as good as another. Somebody described it to me as 'a durned tight squeeze,' which is rather more expressive. Is it true that the whole Budd gang was aboard the vessel, and that they stood ready with rifles to shoot you both if you shouldn't be drowned?"

"That is a slight embellishment," said Nellie, smiling. "Everything aboard was as quiet and apparently as lifeless as death itself. The vessel came upon us like a towering and irresistible fate. I was hurled, as it seemed, miles under water, and remember nothing more till I found myself weak and wet, on shore."

"And that dear, good Solomon, to swim out and save you both at the risk of his own life; I love him for it, I declare."

"He swam out in a boat, Sally."

"In a boat?"

"Yes."

"O, the wretch! to be sailing under such false colors. Here I was defying him in my fancy as a perfect hero; and he did his heroism in a boat. I'll never forgive him for it."

"Yes you will."

"I wont. I'm disappointed; I gave him too much credit, and so I have paid him all the thanks I owe him, and more, and can't get even with him again without giving him a scolding."

"I wont have you scold him."

"Now hold your tongue. You're an invalid. You have no business interfering. All you have to do is to look pretty and interesting. Solomon must have a scolding."

"I'll take his part, then, and praise as fast as you can scold."

An influx of visitors interrupted them. Sally, at Nellie's request, relieved her from the strain of entertaining them; which principally consisted in repeating the story of the escape in a new key for every new visitor.

Nellie was soon exhausted by this continued excitement, and retired, leaving Sally in possession of the field. The latter did her duty as hostess by giving all new visitors a narrative of the affair, flavored to suit the taste, the spice of her imagination being thrown in more profusely at every new effort, until the simple incident had grown into a soul-stirring tragedy.

"Now, Sally Price, I declare, if you tell such a story agin, I'll contradict you. You aint got an ounce of truth to every pound of fancy."

Solomon had been present at her last repetition of the nautical scene, and had seen her audience depart, as deeply impressed as if they had heard a whole Odyssey.

"Don't you attempt to interfere. They come here for an interesting story, and it would be a shame not to accommodate them."

"Anyhow, I won't stand the part you give me. Lay it on Howard's shoulders as deep as you please, for there was never a braver man. But any fool could have rowed a boat out and pulled them in."

"Than you want to say that you acted like a fool in doing so?"

"Well, no, I don't mean quite that."

"It's well you say so, or I might introduce it into my next account."

"Oh, bring it in if you want to. You can't tell them anything about me they don't know."

"If you think they know it, I won't waste words in telling it. I would rather hide it than tell it, Solomon; but if you go round telling everybody that you are a fool, there is no use in my contradicting you."

"I only impeach myself to you, Sally. I know you won't believe me, and there's danger some of the other folks would."

"Don't be too sure that I won't. I find it's a good plan to take people at their own measure; that is, when they are giving a low measure of themselves."

"Well, lay it on me as much as you please. Praise Howard. There's a man has acted as nobly as a king."

"Out on your king. As nobly as a lover, you mean. What does all his heroism show but that he's dead in love with Nellie Brown, and like a true lover, would die to save her."

"Do you really think so?" asked Solomon, gravely.

"I'm sure he wouldn't have fought so hard if it had been me, or any other girl but the one it was."

"Mebbe so; I sartainly didn't look at it that way afore."

"Why, where's all your jealousy? That should have taught you."

"I haven't any. You know how I have loved her. No girl was ever loved better. But it's all of no use. She'll never return it."

"Then, what's the use of wasting your sweetness on the desert air?"

"Can't you be serious for two minutes together? I'm in dead earnest, girl. I've given her the best and deepest feelings I've got, an' she's just stone to me."

"Then quit dropping the water of your love on a stone. Try iron something softer."

"Where am I to find it? Most of the softness round here is soft heads instead of soft hearts. I know only another worth thinkin' about in the whole place."

"Who is that?"

"You, Sally. You're a jewel, an' that I mean, too, an' not a mite of flattery."

"Now don't be treating me to your molasses and water. Compliments don't taste well in my mouth."

"It's not a compliment; it's the truth. Do you s'pose I've known you all these years, an' don't know you better than you do yourself?"

"No, you know nothing about me, or you wouldn't be talking such nonsense."

"There's not a bit of nonsense about it. You're just a jolly, whole-souled, good-hearted, contrary little imp, an' I've half a mind to fall in love with you."

"No thanks to you, I don't want leavings."

"Now don't throw cold water on my affection. How do you know but I was just about to propose?"

"How do you know but that I was just about to box your ears?"

"What, for making love to you?"

"No, for your impudence."

"No impudence about it. Why shouldn't I make love to you, if I feel like it, and why shouldn't you take it kindly? Where in two older and better friends?"

"Now, I won't have you making fun of me! Stop it this instant! If you have nothing better or more interesting to talk about, you had best be off. I've had enough of your company."

"Why shouldn't I mean it?" he answered, laughing. "It's queer, Sally. In all the time I've known you, we've never started this subject. You're so full of your jokes always, that I've jest looked on you as somebody to joke with. Yet, why shouldn't we fall in love with one another, if we wanted? And how do you know but I'm in earnest this minute?"

"I know I won't have any more of such talk. You can make fun about anything else, but I won't joke with you on that subject."

"I didn't know that you looked on it seriously. If that's the case, suppose we change the subject?"

Mr. Howard returned towards evening, having had considerable success in his quest. The Sheriff and other officers at the county town had shared his indignation at the bold deeds of the outlaws. It was evident that it would not do to permit such murderous assaults to pass unnoticed, and they readily agreed to do all in their power to assist the inhabitants of the country around Burton, and of the other districts specially exposed to the outlaws. The proposal to organize an expedition of citizens to enter the Swamp, and, if possible, to capture them, was warmly received, and numerous volunteers immediately offered themselves. Numerous plans of operation were successively proposed, and discarded as impracticable.

Howard's proposal was, that the expedition should break up into a number of strong parties, each to enter the swamp at a different point, and make as thorough a search as possible.

As he said, he had been through a portion of it, and knew the difficulties of passage, and the trouble they would have to bring the outlaws to bay in its deep recesses.

All their plans appeared, on debate, to be impracticable. It was evident that each party would have to follow the directions of the most practicable passage, the greater portion of the swamp being impassable to those not accustomed to it. There would thus be left open abundant avenues of escape to the outlaws. Still, it was possible, that, with the aid of dogs, they might be able to follow them up.

The outlaws had become so great a scourge to the county, that it was evident that some effort must be made to capture them; and the authorities finally agreed to take the matter in hand, and to see what could be done towards organizing an expedition, and what information could be obtained as to the practicable passages through the swamp.

Mr. Howard took the opportunity of his presence in the county town to examine the property records in the offices, and obtained some information that puzzled him, and added greatly to the evidences of his being on the track of the mystery which he was seeking to unfold. He immediately embodied this new point in a letter to his father.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LETTER ARRIVES.

Several days elapsed before Mr. Howard received an answer to his letter. This interval was largely occupied in debating on the subject of the proposed raid on the swamp. The importance of something being done was very generally conceded. At the same time cold water was thrown on any hopes of success through any of the plans broached.

So many efforts had been made ineffectually to destroy this gang that the inhabitants had begun to accept their presence as a fatality. They were, therefore, hopeless of any good results from the expedition, and thought it preferable to await opportunities to cut off the Budds in some of their thieving exploits when distant from their hiding place.

Advices from Lumberton also were unpromising. The information obtained by the authorities was unfavorable to their project. It was remembered that the effort had been made before, with very ill success. The fact that this previous attempt had been badly managed was not taken into account. The indications were also strong that there could not be obtained a sufficient force willing to participate in the expedition.

Mr. Howard, whose indignation against the outlaws was intense, and more on Miss Brown's account than on his own, was disappointed at this lack of energy in the people, and found himself hoping that some depredation would be committed that would force the citizens to rise in self-defence. He felt confident, from his experience, that a properly conducted raid would be, at least partly, successful.

He spent much of this interval in Nellie Brown's company. Their mutual danger and escape seemed to draw them together by close links of association and interest. Her gratitude had the warmth of love. His joy in her safety was as fervent as that of a lover over the rescue from danger of his betrothed. Thus love was in the manner of both, though not in their speech. But, as usual in such cases, neither interpreted the other justly. What would have been clear to a disinterested observer was to them quite opaque. She seemed to him strangely indifferent. He to her cold and repressed in his manner. It was that each was striving to appear natural, while concealing their true feelings, the inevitable result being that both appeared thoroughly unnatural.

Thus, instead of drawing into closer contact as a result of their late experience, there seemed now some invisible bar thrust between them, forcing them asunder.

Thus it is that souls often when nearest together seem furthest apart, and misapprehension has been the most potent agent in separating those whom nature and circumstances seek to draw together.

His expected answer at length arrived. It was long, but so important in its conclusions that we are obliged to give them in detail. It ran thus:

"It might appear to some as if your lengthened stay was likely to prove of no effect. And in fact the information you have so far succeeded in obtaining has, in itself, no fruitful promise of success.

"But if this be combined with other, more significant circumstances, it seems to me that we have considerable reason to be encouraged.

"Let us consider these points. First, your presence in that neighborhood seems particularly obnoxious to some unknown personage, and to an extent that shows his objection is of terrible import to him.

"No less than three attempts have been made upon your life. Now when parties, for no apparent purpose, indulge in persistent efforts to commit so terrible a crime, it is evident that they must be actuated by intense personal feeling, or by powerful reasons of an impersonal character. Either somebody sincerely hates you, or you are greatly in somebody's way.

"That personal feeling is not the cause, we may rest satisfied. You know of no special offense you have given any one, and the efforts of hatred would not have so persistently confined themselves to that locality.

"You are then in somebody's way. But no person residing in that region can know anything about you or your objects. The animus of these assaults must come from elsewhere. How then can your presence there affect any distant person? You go there hoping to uncover a secret which it is the interest of certain parties to keep concealed. They may possibly be willing to protect their secret by the most unscrupulous means.

"As we thus can conceive of but one cause for these effects, we have some justification in arguing that your presence there is full of danger to the certain parties in question. This could not be unless the solution of the mystery lay there, and they had reason to fear that you might at any moment happen upon it.

"If it is there, how are we to find it? It is only conjecture that there is a child living, and even if so, we know nothing of its sex, or condition. So far you appear to have found no indications of such a person. Your last letter, however, has, in more ways than one, been important to me.

"First, your transcript from the Deed Books of Robeson County, show that a party named John Middleton, did, twenty years ago, convey for the benefit of one Ellen Brown, a certain house and piece of ground.

"Now as Mr. John Middleton is the certain party I have heretofore referred to, and as Ellen Brown is possessed of the property which had seemed to me most probably the one that I knew to have formerly belonged to Middleton, the confirmation of my belief is a point gained.

"Also what you have said in regard to vessels laden with turpentine barrels plying on Lumber river, has enabled me to supply a defect in the landscape sketch which you sent me, and I am quite sure, from the effect of this addition on my memory, that the property in question is the one I remembered to have seen.

"Now the question arises, who is this Ellen, or Nellie Brown, as you designate her? Neither her name, nor that of the Miss Wilton, who is claimed as her aunt, has any significance to us. Her father seems to have come hither from Illinois, simply to die, and leave her in a state of orphanage, to the care of this aunt. Our secret has a connection with the West, but, so far as we know, not with Illinois. The father might have bought this property from Middleton, and had it deeded directly to his daughter. But you say there is nothing in the Deed to show that he took any part in forming it. It is a strange circumstance for a property to be conveyed to an infant, for an unreasonably small price, and nothing to show who transacted the business on the child's behalf.

"Another point of considerable importance is this. The last attempt at murder, and one that only Providence prevented from being successful, was directed against her as well as against yourself. It might be claimed that this was simply a result of the murderous malignity of the outlaws. But some directing head is at work behind the efforts of these unscrupulous hands, and shrewd heads don't risk failure by attempting unnecessary work. If they had wished your death alone, some better opportunity would have been taken.

"Now this inclines me to think that Miss Nellie Brown may be the person of whom we are in search. How this can be, I am not prepared to say. Her name is certainly against this theory—but names are not immutable. In the seeming mystery surrounding her origin there may be hidden a change of name. This conveyance of property to her has a very suspicious look. Finally, I argue thus: If any have been feared that your search was approaching success, and as the attempts to remove you alone had proved failures, it may have been decided to remove all the stumbling-blocks from their path at one fell swoop. I cannot account otherwise for the effort to include this lady in the assault upon your life.

"You see, then, that our avenue of research is narrowed to the question as to the antecedents of Nellie Brown—and this we must work diligently.

"I hope you will obey my wishes and return home, as I am in constant dread that these unscrupulous murderers may yet succeed in

their designs against your life. You have refused to be governed by my wishes; I reiterate them. I am sure we can work up the affair now without further need of your presence there.

"If, however, you should persist in your expressed determination of remaining, with the purpose of seeking to revenge yourself on the gang of villains who have so often waylaid you, I must do what I can to put you on your guard, and enable you to avoid future danger.

"You are inclined to be unsuspicious. I am inclined contrarily. I must infuse into you my suspicions.

"It is very evident to my mind, that the party whom we are operating against has an agent there. These assaults on your life are too well-timed to be devised by any one not having close surveillance of your actions.

"The Budd gang can have no personal enmity to you. They are simply a set of unscrupulous villains who can be bought to the perpetration of any act. They are undoubtedly hired to murder you, if possible. The party at work behind the scenes must be in frequent communication with them. Now ask yourself what person in that locality best answers to these particulars. The stealing of the letter from you could have been performed only by one who knew that you had written and despatched it. Your carrier found one of the robbers familiar to him, though not fully able to recognize him. From their remarks, it appears to me, that they fear my suspicions, but not yours. This shows that there is some one who has reason to dread suspicion.

"So, the late attack on you must have been made by one who knew you would be on the water at that day and hour. Cannot you see to whom my remarks point?

"In the first assault on you, one of the parties spoke with the language of an educated man. These outlaws you know to be deplorably ignorant.

"Now, who is likely to be in communication with the outlaws? You have spoken to me of a party who spends a considerable portion of his time roaming the country alone, on pretense of gunning. Does he bring much game in?

"It seems to me that he has not yet succeeded in taking the game he is after. It was this party that led you into the swamp, and into an ambush of the outlaws. His very familiarity with the passes of the swamp shows that he has frequently visited it; and not, you may be sure, for the purpose of gunning. No sensible man would go into so dangerous a place as that for sport.

"His behavior, too, in leaving you to the tender mercies of his friends, and making the best of his way to the boat, looks suspicious. You have told me that Solomon Muddle does not appear to like him. Solomon is wise.

"In short, I conceive that this party, whom no one knows; who has followed you there, and forced himself upon you; who answers to all the points above made; this Simon Du Bar—is the active agent in these murderous attempts.

"Watch him closely, my son, and I think you will find reason to agree with me. But do not let him know that you suspect anything. He is shrewd and unscrupulous, and you must be wary. He has so far succeeded in deceiving you by a specious manner. It is your turn now to deceive him. But I must bring this long letter to a close. I have given you the case as it appears to me, and am sure you will see it in the same light. Be wary and watchful, and we shall yet succeed. Your loving father,

"JOHN HOWARD."

This epistle wakened Mr. Howard out of a dream, in which he had been walking. Could it be possible that the agreeable and gentlemanly Du Bar was such a *villain*? The circumstances pointed overwhelmingly that way. Yet he could not, without direct proof, bring himself to believe it.

But the longer the idea dwelt in his mind the more doubtful did his confidence in Du Bar become. Point after point of a suspicious character obtruded itself upon his memory. He could not deny to himself the force of his father's argument. Besides, there had occurred several slighter incidents which added to the burden of suspicion.

He had noticed something recognizable in Du Bar's voice on first making his acquaintance. Might it have been that he had the voice of one of his attempted assassins impressed on his memory at the time, and that they were the same?

At all events, he must be wary, must keep a keen watch over this person's actions, yet must avoid any appearance of distrust, and make no change in his bearing towards him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN INTERVIEW.

Back of Miss Brown's house the garden ended in a romantic glen. A rivulet ran prattling down the bottom of the valley, on each side of which rose gently sloping elevations, which the hand of cultivation had elegantly adorned with trees and flowers. It was a beautiful spot, and one often frequented by the inmates of the house.

Further up the stream nature asserted her sway. The banks came closer to the stream, and rose more steeply, and thick clusters of natural vegetation succeeded the more attractive results of art. This ravine ran for half a mile back, gradually diminishing in elevation till it broke down into the general level of the country. The stream flowed from springs in the pine forest back.

Miss Wilton walked up the stream into the wilder and more secluded portion of the glen. Mr. Du Bar walked down the stream, gun on shoulder. He had evidently been shooting in the woods, and finding game scarce, had concluded to stroll down in this direction.

In consequence, he met Miss Wilton. They both acted as if this meeting were no surprise, as if, in fact, it had been counted on as one of the contingencies of their walk.

They seated themselves on a broad, flat stone that lay half sunken in the ground beside the stream. Du Bar leaned on his gun and looked round with enjoyment of the scene. Miss Wilton was deeply absorbed in the mysteries of some fancy work which she had brought in her hand. For some time neither spoke.

At length she wakened from her state of pre-occupation, or probably grew tired of waiting for him to break the silence.

"Well, sir," she said, "you have put me off again and again, till patience has almost ceased to be a virtue. You have promised me your decision to-day. Now, what is it?"

"But, my dear Miss Wilton, I can see no occasion for you to be so peremptory. The day is a fine one; we can well devote an hour or two to a pleasant conversation. What occasion is there then for your wanting to bring our interview to so abrupt a close?"

"Because I have grown tired of your prevarications. I don't want to be put off any longer; and what is more to the purpose, I don't intend to be. Pointed remarks serve best with you, Simon Du Bar, as you call yourself—and so I come at once to the point."

"I see, a very sharp point. And to make sure that I shall feel it, you drive it into me. Well, then, since you will have it so, to what extent have you abated the comical demand you made on me a short time ago?"

"Not one penny."

"Do you know, my dear Miss Wilton, that you are simply ridiculous?"

"Perhaps so. Ridiculously obstinate, you think. Very likely you will find me so."

"I would not give you a tithe of the sum for all the papers in existence."

"Very well, I shall make no effort to change your decision. I am obliged to you, though, for having at length given me a decided answer. I shall know now what course to pursue, and as they are of no value to you, shall proceed to dispose of them elsewhere."

Du Bar sat for a time in silence, looking sternly before him, a hard, cold expression settling round his mouth, his hand grasping the barrel of his gun as though he sought to crush the firm iron.

The hill sides here were covered with thick bushes, becoming trees higher up. The leaves rustled in the wind with a low sound. But back of them the bushes were quivering rather more than could be attributed to the wind. This peculiar motion passed in a slow line through the thicket, gradually approaching the place where they sat. It was masked, however, by the effect of the wind, and they heard and saw nothing strange.

"So you think of seeking another market with your wares?" he at length said.

"Yes."

"Well, I have no objections. I am slightly inclined to believe that you will get another price than you have bargained with me for, but that is your business."

"Exactly. As I shall probably have some trouble I intend to fix my price so as to pay me. You have released me from my offer to you, for which I am obliged. My price now is twenty thousand dollars."

"Twenty thousand?"

"Yes. It is hardly the value of my secret, but as much as I care for."

"And the inside of a prison to enjoy it in?"

"Not at all. I have learned something from my dealings with you. Trust me to take care of myself."

"Don't be too sure of that."

"I am quite satisfied. Still I don't wish to be hard on you. You shall have the first chance to purchase."

The movement in the bushes had ceased about ten paces distant. All was now still, except the slight rustling of the leaves.

"At ten thousand?"

"No. That offer was refused and withdrawn. My price is now twenty thousand."

"Do you see the robin yonder, my dear Cousin Wilton? On the oak, I mean. That bird would not be hard to bring down from this distance." He laid the gun to his shoulder as he spoke.

"It is a long distance. But you might hit it."

"I fear not. I have made such shots before, and have brought down larger and scarcer game. I think my aim would fail me to-day. His eyes gleamed with a cruel light.

"I think not," she coolly replied. "Particularly as there is no larger game at hand worth the shooting. I forgot to mention to you that the papers are safe, and that in the event of any accident happening to me they would fall into good hands."

The gun slowly slid down till its butt rested on the ground, and he sat leaning on the barrel as before. Another interval of silence fell between them.

"Do you know, my dear cousin, that I am inclined to doubt your word?"

"I know that does not affect its truth," she replied, continuing to herself, "he would not hesitate to murder me if he could gain anything by it."

"These papers have some value to me. That I acknowledge," he said. "But no such exorbitant value as you have set on them. Still as you appear to hold them in such high estimation, and as I do not value a few thousands highly, I will humor your fancy so far as to provide for a faithful agent to the extent of five thousand dollars."

"Believe me, Cousin John; or shall it be, Friend Simon? your offer is appreciated—for what it is worth; and I am grateful for your kindly desire to provide for your faithful agent." Her tone conveyed none of the sarcasm expressed in her words. "But somehow I have conceived a different idea of the value of these papers. I consider them worth a figure that may be anything from one to ten hundred thousand. You see I am not posted in the value of the Middleton property. Now it seems to me that I am quite moderate in my demand, and that the sum I ask is a small figure for a large service. Moreover, you will not feel it."

"You speak of twenty thousand dollars as if you were talking of twenty cents. What if I were to tell you that the property in question is not worth fifty thousand?"

"You would simply waste breath, as I would not believe you."

"I will concede this much. I have no power to make any bargain. The utmost I can do will be to write and state your extravagant demand, and await an answer."

"Very well. But bear one thing in mind. Don't let the answer be long in coming. If my present offer is not accepted within a week I shall consider it refused, and hold myself at liberty to propose new terms. And strangely enough the longer this affair stands open the more avaricious I become. I shall be doubling the sum again if it stands long."

"Take my advice, my dear cousin, don't try it on. It might prove dangerous to all parties. You know I am sometimes hot blooded, and when my temper is aroused I cannot answer for myself."

"Which I suppose is intended for a threat?"

"Take it as you will," he replied, rising and looking down upon her with a defiant expression.

"Take it for what it is worth, you mean. What if say it is worth nothing? That I fear your threats no more than I fear this puff of wind?"

"If you are wise you will not provoke me too far."

She rose too, and returned his gaze with one as bold and fearless.

"I know what you are capable of," she replied. "I know that it is more through good luck than good judgment that Robert Howard is alive to-day. I know further that you have practiced against the life of my niece. And this I have to say, once for all, that if any further attempt of the kind is made I will denounce you. I make no threats. You know the full meaning of what I have said without farther explanation."

"Precisely. I have no intention of harming her. Nor Howard either, if he will only have the wit to leave this place and go where he belongs. As long as he stays here prying I will make no promise. He stands on dangerous ground."

"I have no love for him. Take your own course."

She turned and walked towards the house, leaving him standing. His face twitched as if the fury of a sudden passion was raging within him. Once he half raised his gun as if inclined to send its charge after her, but let it fall again heavily to the earth.

She walked on unconcernedly, not once turning to look back, to all appearance satisfied that he would not dare to harm her.

"The she witch!" he muttered, savagely. "She knows too much. But I have a card or two to play yet before I give in to her demand. There are more ways than one of settling a game like this. She lies in hinting that she has put the papers out of her hand. She is too suspicious to do that, and trusts too much in herself. The casket is locked up in her desk, that I am sure of. Before trying for it, though, I will play another card. The young lady has been gracious to me lately. If I can win her, I win the whole game."

He turned on his heel, threw the weapon across his shoulder, and strode up the glen, the way he had come.

As he did so the slight rustle in the bushes again appeared. If he had looked back he might have seen a face peering eagerly and triumphantly out from a screen of green leaves. A black thumb was applied to a black nose, and the fingers extended in a manner highly expressive of derision.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

COUNTED OUT.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY CYD RICHMOND.

Miss Selina Seymore was pretty.

Miss Selina Seymore was evidently aware of that fact, as she surveyed herself in the elegant French plate glass of her boudoir.

Miss Selina had magnificent eyes.

Strange to say, Miss Selina seemed aware of this also, and made good (we would not even hint that it was bad) use of them, as many a poor fellow could testify.

Miss Dora Desmond was also pretty. But Miss Dora Desmond was peculiar; she seemed unconscious of this, knowing that she looked well enough, she thought no more about it.

Miss Selina had "just come out." Miss Dora had "come out strong," so to speak.

Miss Dora had just "come out." But she did not appear to have come out entirely. There was still something behind. It might be modesty, or it might be intellect; possibly both. Nor would we intimate that Miss Seymore was deficient in these qualities, for had she not been through a boarding-school?

Arthur Walpole was a young lawyer, who by genius and hard work, was steadily rising in his profession. He had met Miss Seymore several times during the season, and had been very much struck by her brilliant manner and those seemingly irresistible eyes. Arthur Walpole sat tipped back in his office chair. He had let the hand-bundle of the grindstone with which he was sharpening his weapons for his next combat, and was taking a few moments breathing spell.

"To-night," thought he, "is the Van Mater's reception. Of course Miss Seymore will be there; and Lulu says that great Count de Montmorency will, who has been making such a stir with his castles on the Rhine, and what not. She says he was very attentive to Miss Seymore at the last ball—It have been there but for this confounded night work—and that she wasn't at all backward in encouraging him. But Lulu's prejudiced. She was very gracious to me at least, -but 'Countess de Montmorency' does sound well. I wonder," continued he, "who that young lady was at that last reception, talking with those literary big guns over there in the corner; I meant to have asked for an introduction; but, those eyes of Miss Seymore's, by Jove! how could I leave?"

The Count de Montmorency was engaged in the delicate and artistic operation of shaving. To the casual observer the Count wielded his razor, and, on the whole, appeared very like the average mortal of humbler birth. But a person at all familiar with aristocracy would have instantly detected that indescribable air, that indelible stamp of nobility, upon the brow, and above all the singularly graceful manner with which he handled his razor, all of which would only have been acquired by birth to command, and one who had enjoyed all the elevating influences and advantages of Court life. But the Count made a mistake. He smiled. His smile was extensive, causing a decided wrinkle in the smooth, white epidermis of his noble face. It was a critical moment. The keen steel just raised the skin. A drop of blood appeared. There was no mistaking, it was the deepest blue. The Count made another mistake. He descended to the use of language usually considered as the favorite mode of expression among stable retainers, street boys, and corner loafers. In short, the Count swore. As the Count was looking fixedly at his own face in the glass, which was by no means to be laughed at, he must have been laughing at his thoughts.

"So far," thought he, "the bait takes; that irresistible Miss Seymore wasn't so irresistible after all. But I must push through to-night, and what was that fellow Blair hinted that it is about time certain bills were paid up. Ha! with old Seymore's money, what will I care for bills. 'Chateau on the Rhine,' though, was good. When I've got the needful safe, the Countess de Montmorency, the pretty fool, will be apt to find it a 'Chateau en Espagne;' and the Count smiled. But he appeared dissatisfied with his past six months' efforts with his razor, and here proceeded to fasten on—I must say it—to fasten on—a false moustache!

Beside the 'indelible stamp' upon his brow, the Count had another equally indelible stamp upon his upper lip, or a little to one side of it, and he seemed very particular that this peculiar scar should be covered perfectly by the moustache.

When Walpole entered the Van Mater's parlors that evening, Miss Seymore stood talking with the Count de Montmorency.

Walpole hastened forward, but was received by her with a coldness almost frigid; a reception very different from his former greetings; and, after a few formal words, she turned again to the Count, without noticing him farther.

Walpole was naturally hurt; and, perhaps, a little unnaturally wrathy.

As he turned away, he glanced back at the Count. The Count was looking at him. His face seemed familiar, and yet, Walpole could not place him. On being introduced to Miss Desmond, the usually thoughtful, and somewhat too quiet lawyer, was forced to bestir himself; and was obliged to keep his wits so completely about him, that he scarcely thought of the Count and this vague resemblance. And he became so fascinated by her brilliant flashes of wit, combined with beauty and good sense, that he soon began to question if Miss Seymore was such a remarkable person, after all.

But at supper he sat opposite the Count. Walpole was satisfied he had seen that face before. Every time he glanced up, he met the Count's eyes fixed on him. Who could it be?

Miss Desmond made a bright speech.

The Count made his third mistake. He smiled again. It raised the moustache. Walpole's eye caught the scar; and it flashed over him in an instant where they had met. But he coolly finished his supper; and when they had returned to the parlor, he solicited an introduction. The Count of course was politely glad to meet Mr. Walpole, and added to himself the amiable wish that Walpole were anywhere but there, in or out of the world, without regard to temperature. Walpole said he believed he had met the gentleman before. The Count was quite certain to the contrary, but turned pale.

"It is no use," said Walpole sternly, "you are ——." The Count made a rush for the door. Walpole's hand was on his arm.

The Count struck at him fiercely. Walpole replied with a well-directed blow, which split his glove and deposited the noble Count ignominiously on the door mat.

"Sir," cried their host, rushing up, "what do you mean by this unprovoked assault?"

"Easy," replied Walpole, smiling, and rapidly going through the pockets of the Count and taking a small pistol from one of them. "I have had the extreme pleasure of this gentleman's acquaintance on a previous occasion at his castle on—on Centre street, Chateau du 'Tombs.' In short, he is the celebrated forger, Charles Jordan, who escaped during his trial."

Miss Seymore promptly fainted, and was removed from the room; and the Count de Montmorency was kindly cared for by a chance policeman.

Some time after, when Miss Dora Desmond had suddenly disappeared, and Mrs. Arthur Walpole had appeared on the scene, it was observed that Walpole seemed to not in the least regret having been "Count-ed out."

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

ALEXIS'S GRAND BUFFALO HUNT—THE PARTY KILL TWENTY-SIX BUFFALO IN ONE DAY.

Alexis and party arrived at North Platte on the 13th inst. at 7 A. M. They breakfasted on the cars at 5 A. M. The ambulances and light wagons for the baggage and a carriage for the Grand Duke met the party, and they started immediately for the camp.

The permanent camp for the buffalo hunt was on the Red Willow creek, about fifty miles southwest of North Platte. The camp consisted of two hospital tents, ten wall tents and a tent for servants and soldiers. Three of the wall tents were floored, and that of the Grand Duke was carpeted. Box and Sibley stoves were provided for the hospital and wall tents, and the hospital tents were used for dining in.

An extensive culinary outfit was also taken along, and also ten thousand rations each of flour, sugar and coffee, and one thousand pounds of tobacco for the Indians. Several companies of cavalry accompanied the party.

Mr. Cady, alias "Buffalo Bill," met the Duke and party at North Platte, and hundreds of Indians with their families surrounded the camp. Spotted Tail, Whistler, War Bonnet, Black Hat, and other redoubtable chiefs came hither with their braves to view the young Russian sportsman.

Alexis enjoyed the whole thing. About ten miles from the camp the buffalo were plentiful, and the whole Ducal party were quite successful in their hunt.

Alexis did his full share of the work. The first day out he killed one buffalo, and the second day two. One of the scouts, known as "Shorty," killed three on the second day. Twenty-six buffalo was the number slaughtered on that day by the whole party.

On the 16th inst. Alexis and suite left North Platte for Denver, where they arrived the next day. They were met at the depot by a large crowd of citizens, and provided with carriages and taken to the American House. A grand ball in honor of the Duke was given on the evening of Jan. 18. The Imperial party expect to reach Chicago on the 21st inst.

ALEXIS IS SNOWBALLED.

It has been done at last, and to St. Louis belongs the proud honor of having given the Grand Duke Alexis a touch of our pure Democracy, unrestrained by the presence of Imperialism. It happend in this wise; H. I. H. was riding through the streets of St. Louis; a snow ball fallen—it does not often snow in St. Louis—as the number promptly pelted each other and passers-by with snowballs. One of these lads took a shy at passing Royalty, in the person of Alexis. Being a good shot, as all Americans are, he not only struck the Ducal hat, but knocked it off the Imperial head, and over the majestic eyes and nose into the right Royal lap. As in duty bound, Alexis smiled, brushed his hat with his coat sleeve, just like an ordinary mortal would have done similarly circumstanced. Now St. Louis has another claim to being made the National Capital, vice Washington, discarded.

ARRAIGNMENT OF STOKES.

NEW YORK, Jan. 18.—Edward S. Stokes, the murderer of Fisk, was arraigned to-day before Judge Ingraham. John Graham, Elbridge T. Gerry, Abner and Willard Bartlett and John McKeon, counsel to the prisoner, entered with him. They pleaded that they had not seen the indictment, and desired time to examine it. The case was, therefore, adjourned to next Wednesday. It is thought that Stokes's counsel will endeavor to prove a bitter enmity to have been experienced on the part of Fisk against the prisoner, and witnesses will swear that Fisk had asserted it to be in his power to get rid of troublesome customers at $5,000 apiece. It also will be seen that Stokes's steps were dogged by suspicious men, under suspicious circumstances. It will be argued also, that Fisk was generally armed, and had a pistol upon his person at the time of his murder.

A KEROSENE THROWER.

In New York, a William Cullson has been charged with throwing kerosene on ladies' dresses at night. When asked what he had to say, he observed that he hated women, and particularly those who were pretty and well-dressed. It gave him, he said, a secret satisfaction to injure them, and he had been in the habit of sprinkling them with kerosene for seven months past. Medical men say that the man is insane—but he has no outward appearance of it. He was sent to Sing Sing for twelve months.

THE CHICAGO DEAD.

We had supposed that the first statements of the loss of life in the great Chicago fire were a good deal exaggerated, but the papers of that city, with full time to make up a careful and accurate estimate, still express the opinion that the death list will foot up considerably over five hundred. Over one hundred bodies have been recovered, nearly all of whom have been identified, and the work of clearing away the ruins is still far from completion. In the swift rush of the flames hundreds of people were unquestionably consumed so completely as not to leave even a vestige of bone, or even ashes, to tell their fate.

A STAGE ROBBER CONVICTED.

Henry Bell Mitchell, an Indian boy fourteen years old, has been convicted of robbing the stage of the Sonoma Company, in California. The robbery was committed by the boy alone, in the night, armed only with a club of wood.

ITEMS.

Several places in South America are afflicted with the small-pox.

M. Catacazy, the late Russian Minister, sails from New York on Saturday, the 20th instant.

Seven women recently voted at a local election in Vallejo, Cal.

Mr. Jesse R. Grant is still confined to his house in Covington, and there is but little probability of his getting out this winter.

There is much excitement at Fordham College, New York, over two attempts to assassinate a student named Benoit, from St. Louis, by an unknown person.

They tell of the Grand Duke that, when his train stopped at Bloomington, Illinois, he appeared upon the back platform, and a strong-minded woman at once began to "interview" him upon female suffrage. The Duke beat a hasty retreat into the car, and remained there until the train left the depot.

FOREIGN NEWS.

GREAT BRITAIN.

THE PRINCE OF WALES TO TAKE A DRIVE.

LONDON, Jan. 15.—It is expected that the Prince of Wales will have sufficiently recovered to be able to drive out from Sandringham in the course of a week.

THE NEW CABLE PROJECT.

The press generally approves the project for laying a new cable from the English coast to that of the United States, and agree that cheaper rates than those of the present lines will be an incentive to the business community and the press of both countries.

HOLLAND.

SMALL-POX IN HOLLAND.

A letter from Dr. F. Hjeclstelin, of Holland, says: "A severe and malignant small-pox epidemic, imported by some French trading vessels into our island, was successfully treated and stamped out with quarantine and sulphurous fumigations without affecting a single Hollander."

FRANCE.

ASSASSINATION OF GERMAN SOLDIERS.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the French authorities to prevent the assassination of German soldiers in the occupied departments, those outrages still continue. Another case is just reported, the victim being a Prussian soldier belonging to the garrison of Lunenville, in the Department of Meurthe. The German artillery commander has demanded the surrender of the assassin, and the French authorities are searching for him.

PERSONAL.—Prince Bismarck has recently been very ill, and the Pope is suffering from a severe cold.

☞ Several large coal piles in Chicago have never been extinguished since the great fire, and still smoulder during the day and blaze forth at night.

☞ An intoxicated man solemnly declared he would never get drunk again. A week after an acquaintance met him, and finding him drunk as usual, chidingly reminded him of his vow. "I thought you were not going to get drunk again?" "This 's same one," resurged. It was his last, and he was buried by charitable citizens.

☞ A little girl wanted to say that she had a fan, but had forgotten the name, so she described it as "a thing to brush the warm off you with."

☞ Mr. Harris, of North Carolina, revives his drooping spirits, whenever he feels dull, by climbing into his ready-made coffin and seeing whether it continues to fit.

☞ A gentleman was chiding his son for staying out late at night, and said:

"Why, when I was of your age, my father would not allow me to go out of the house after dark."

"Then you had a dence of a father, you had," said the young profligate.

Whereupon the father very rashly vociferated: "I had a confounded sight better one than you have, you young rascal."

☞ Cleveland is agitated over a case of *trichina spiralis* which has occurred there, resulting in the death of one man and the illness of his whole family. A microscopic examination of a piece of muscle taken from the body of the dead man revealed a multitude of the trichinæ or small worms produced in diseased pork. The symptoms of this disease are mild or severe according to the amount of diseased pork eaten, and the only way to escape its terrible effects is to exercise the greatest care in the selection of this article of food.

☞ A London merchant advertised for a clerk who could "bear confinement." He received an answer from one who had been seven years in jail.

PHILADELPHIA CATTLE MARKET.

The supply of Beef Cattle during the past week amounted to about 1000 head, and sold at 13@15c. 200 Cows brought $40@75 ⅌ head. Sheep—13,000 head were disposed of at 6@7c. ⅌ lb. 3178 Hogs sold at $7@12½ ⅌ 100 lbs net.

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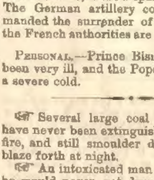

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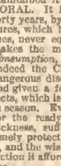

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WIT AND HUMOR.

THE MODERN HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY.

To shave, or not to shave; that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler for a youth to suffer
The sprouts and spriggs of an outrageous whisker,
A weak moustache, or sparsely bristled chin,
Or with a razor end them. To shave—to scrape,
No more. And by this act to say we end
All further trouble, o'er the few particular shoots
That we are heir to. 'Tweere a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To shave—to scrape.
To scrape—perchance to slip, aye, there's the rub!
For from a careless move, what cuts may come
To vex anew the spirit tried with toil.
But who would bear for any length of time
The oppressful joke, the bearded man's contempt,
The pangs of fruitless hope, the crop's delay,
The insolence of *gamins*, and the spurns
That half-fledged *homo* of the full-whiskered takes;
When he himself might his quietus make
With a dull razor? None would long forbear
To slash and skirmish with a barber's knife,
But that the dread of swerving a hair's breadth,
Making of misery a fresh return
With clumsy thumbs—puzzles some wills.
And rather makes them bear those ills they have,
Than to attempt an art they know not of.
Nature, in time, makes barbers of us all,
And thus the chin, after an operation,
No longer bristles with a pale cast of fuzz.
And wicked punsters, of great pith and humor,
In this regard, their visage turn awry
And lose their occupation.

BUSINESS AND DUTY COMBINED.

A MODEL OBITUARY.—A disconsolate editor thus bemoans his departed spouse:

"Thus my wife died. No more will those loving hands pull off my boots and part my back hair as only a true wife can. Nor will those willing feet replenish the coal-hod or water-pail. No more will she arise amid the tempestuous storms of winter, and his herself away to build the fire without disturbing the slumbers of the man who doted on her so artlessly. Her memory is embalmed in my heart of hearts. I wanted to embalm her body, but I found that I could embalm her memory cheaper.

I procured of Eli Mudget, a neighbor of mine, a very pretty gravestone. His wife was consumptive, and he kept it on hand several years, in anticipation of her death. But she rallied last spring, and his hopes were blasted. Never shall I forget the poor man's grief when I asked him to part with it. 'Take it, Skinner, and may you never know what it is to have your soul racked with disappointment, as mine has been!' and he burst into a flood of tears. His spirit was, indeed, utterly broken.

I had the following epistle engraved upon her tombstone: 'To the memory of Tabitha, wife of Moses Skinner, Esq., gentlemanly editor of the Trombone. Terms, $3 dollars a year, invariably in advance. A kind mother and exemplary wife. Office over Coleman's grocery, up two flights of stairs. Knock hard. We shall miss thee, mother, we shall miss thee. Job printing solicited.' Thus did my lacerated spirit cry out in agony, even as Rachel, weeping for her children. But one ray of light penetrated the despair of my soul. The undertaker took his pay in job printing, and the sexton owed me a little account I should not have gotten any other way. Why should we pine at the mysterious ways of Providence and vicinity? (Not a conundrum.")

A GRIM JOKE.

The late Isaac O. Barnes has been the subject of many good stories, one of which has not yet found its way into print. He had been invited to attend the funeral of a particular friend and crony, and as the deceased had, at their last interview, specially urged his being present, he felt in duty bound to respond. Arrived at the house of mourning, he found the family assembled in a very small and uncomfortable room, in the middle of which stood the coffin, that all might take a last look at the face of the departed. The service was conducted by two clergymen, friends of the family, who, with their long prayers and extended "remarks," consumed fully two hours, during which Mr. Barnes suffered untold agony of suspense and impatience. Hardly had the second minister pronounced his "amen," when Barnes, in his well-known squeaky voice, turning to the person sitting nearest him, said:

"Did you know Kid?"

"Yes, sir," said the man addressed, in a low voice.

"Good fellow, wasn't he?" continued Barnes.

"Yes, sir," still in a suppressed tone.

"And he was a mighty smart one, too," squeaked Barnes.

"Very smart," almost whispered the other, as the company present began to look in that direction.

"Yes, he was," piped Barnes, still louder, with one of his expressive expletives, "and if he'd had the running of this funeral, he'd have been under the ground an hour and a half ago."

A STARTLING ANSWER.

A good story is told of a teacher who was talking to her scholars regarding the order of the higher beings. It was a very profitable subject, and one in which the children took an uncommon interest. She told them that the angels came first in perfection, and when she asked them who came next, and was readily answered by one boy, "Man," she felt encouraged to ask:

"What comes next to man?"

And here a little shaver, who was evidently smarting under a defeat in the preceding question, immediately distanced all competition by promptly shouting:

"His undershirt, ma'am."

BEN BRADSHAW.

Ben Bradshaw was an actor, but his prospects were not bright, for though he was a "heavy man," his *gravity* was *light*. Ben told the manager one day that he could not afford to play upon the *boards* for less than served to pay his *board*. "And I must have a *raise*," he said. "A *small* advance will suit." "All right," the other cried, and *raised* the actor on his boot. The kick was cruel, hard and sore, and Ben had fighting grit, so he pesled, and gave the manager a slashing *Ben-le-fit*. He skinned his nose, he knocked him down, and blackened both his eyes. "Enough, enough! I'll *raise* your pay!" "All right," said Ben, "now *rise!*"

AN ASTONISHED MOTHER.—A few days since a "wee bit of a boy" astonished his mother. She had occasion to chastise him slightly for some offence he had committed. Charley sat very quietly in his chair for some time afterward, no doubt thinking very profoundly. At last he spoke out thus: "Muzzer, I wish pa'd get anuzzer housekeeper; I've got tired seein' you round."

MRS. PARTINGTON SPEAKS AGAIN.—MRS. Partington entered the office of the probate judge (called "civilian") and inquired in her blandest tone: "Are you the civil villain?" "Do you wish to insult me, madam?" said the judge. "Yes," replied the amiable old lady; "my brother died detested, and left three infidel children, and I'm to be their executioner; so I want to insult the civil villain about it."

A READY ANSWER.—A man arriving home at a late hour a little the worse for too much supper, hatless and coatless, was asked by his indignant spouse: "Where's your hat and coat?" "Sent 'em, my dear, (hic) to the Chicago sufferers!"

PUTTING HIS BEST FOOT FORWARD.—Irate Officer—"Misther O'Brien, ye're out o' step, sir!"

Smart Private.—"Shure thin, darlin', it's meself that's the only man in the houl ridgment that's *in* step, ye name."

Leaves from a Pocket Diary.

No. 10.

FORBIDDING THE BANS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY CAPTAIN CARNES.

It is quite unnecessary for me to say that I became intensely interested in No. 98 after our adventure with the bushwackers. After he recovered from his wounds I was a not unfrequent visitor. It was evident, as weeks went on without any farther trouble with the ruffians, that it was a matter of attempted assassination, and calculating that they had most assuredly given him his death, they had departed to some new field of adventure.

Lieutenant Spaulding's family and myself had discussed the history of No. 98 with intense interest. Spaulding had come out to the colonies only a few years before I had landed from the George F. Channing. We had hailed from the vicinity of Manchester, and the result of our intimacy was a conspiracy for or against No. 98 as time might prove.

The next vessel homeward-bound from Australia bore some mysterious packages written in Spaulding's peculiarly crabbed style. Previously, however, on the merits of my friendship, I had got at No. 98's real name.

Now, again, I must seemingly digress to give you something relating to the Spauldings private history. There was but one child in the family—a daughter—of the subtle, bewitching age of nineteen, or thereabouts. Years before they had left England, she had been taught to look upon herself as the betrothed wife of a young fellow then at Eton.

It was a matter of financial diplomacy on the part of the parents of these young people to consolidate the houses of Spaulding and Glover; and as children, Ellen and Henry, had not thought of objecting in the stereotyped, novelistic style; and whatever influences other surroundings might have had upon the young girl, her father's exile in the southeastern continent made her rather feverishly delighted with the prospect of Henry's soon coming to claim her and bear her back again into the world, for whose allurements her gay spirits pined.

Time rolled on, and the season, not of the falling leaf exactly, but of the snapping bark, had come and gone, some of the Australian trees having that method of denoting their autumn time; and yet our plans had not borne fruit. Spaulding and myself waited and wondered and conjured up improbabilities, and zealously shunned the mention of possibilities.

"It is true that time waits for no man, there are periods in our lives when time gets over the road with a snail's pace; but there is, also, sometimes, truth in the saw, that "patient waiters are no losers."

Very many months had elapsed after the sending to England of Spaulding's mysterious packages, ere another vessel, with its usual complement of convicts, cut the waters of the broad sea, with her prow headed for the lonely continent in the desert of waters.

We had managed our best to keep William Bond, or No. 98, whichever you choose, in ignorance of the arrival of this vessel, freighted, perhaps, with happiness, or misery, for himself.

This vessel would be freighted with joy or sorrow, for more than one, for in it Henry Glover was to take passage, to claim his bride and bear her back to England.

Spaulding and myself were on the wharf, awaiting her coming into the harbor.

There was much bustle and confusion, of course, the officials having important duties to attend to, in the landing of the convicts and passengers. I, as a spectator, was virtually idle.

The last passengers were landing, and I was turning away with a deadly disappointment.

But see! The very last person that comes ashore, is a small, fragile-looking woman, sick, alike from a long sea voyage and a tumult of uncertainty within her breast. She glances with fearful eagerness over the crowds of natives and other people, and then reeling feebly forward, seems about to fall, fainting, where she is.

"That is your woman;" and Lieutenant Spaulding motioned rapidly towards the passenger whom I have mentioned. "See to her," and locking arms with a tall, young man, he hastens away.

I advanced directly towards the fainting woman, and pronounced in a low voice,—

"Mrs. Bond?"

She just threw out her hands, and groping blindly, toppled forward, upon the arm which I had outstretched to save her.

I carried her up to a small house, close by the barracks, and had her ministered to, until she recovered sufficiently to ask some feeble questions, and answer some queries which I put to her.

If she had been troubled with heart-disease, she must have died, in her alternations of hope and fear. She became so agitated, as the day drew its close, and I proposed that we should start for the vicinity of the shepherd's precincts, that I feared for the result.

It would kill her if William Bond should refuse credence to her account; yet she held papers, signed by persons who testified to the truth of her statements.

Spaulding sent to know if we wished a detachment of soldiers to accompany us. We did not. Two horses were placed at our disposal, and mounting, we dashed away. The exhilirating ride through the bush, brought a faint color to Mrs. Bond's delicate cheeks.

I left her in the edge of a coppice, but she was so powerfully agitated, that I was obliged to take her off her horse, and seat her upon the sward. She leaned back against a hillock, and I went on.

I found Bond, just fastening his folding-gates. As ever, he gave me a cordial welcome. Pitying the poor woman whom I had left in the coppice, I began, immediately, to pave the way to my story.

"A ship came in to-day," said I.

"With convicts?" he questioned, his eye lighting with its baneful glow.

"Yes, a small number. They had a fearful time on the voyage. They had a desperate gang, what there were of them. They mutinied, and several of the crew, as well as of the prisoners, were killed, or wounded."

"Why did I not know it?" he hurriedly questioned. "I should have been there to look them over."

"There were several passengers. The young fellow who is to marry Spaulding's daughter, was on board." He seemed but little interested. "Important news—at least for you—came over at the same time with this young Etonian. He hails, you know, from Manchester."

William Bond shuddered perceptibly, but soon answered in his vehement manner.—

"Good God! what should I know, or care, of Manchester matters? Have I not shaken the dust of the accursed city off my feet?"

"I know—but Gordon McGouth has just died, and confessed his sins."

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed, madly. "So fate has cheated me of my due, has it—and permitted him to die a natural death, like the righteous?"

"No; he fell from the mail train up from Essex, and had his lower limbs crushed to pulp."

GRANDMAMMA.—"Well, Flora, as you've c
FLORA.—"But, gran'ma, you haven't any

"Ha, ha, ha! and died howling for mercy, eh? Perhaps I couldn't have managed better—perhaps I couldn't."

Bond was half insane.

"Among other things, he confessed that he had planned for your destruction, but said that he had already interceded for you, and procured a pardon, if you had not returned."

"Curse his dust!"

"He testified that your wife, Agnes, was forcibly abducted by him, although he had forged her handwriting, and led you to suppose that she had gone with him voluntarily."

"Fiends seize his soul!"

"But that after some months of captivity she had eluded his vigilance and escaped, but not before you were shipped for the colonies and penal servitude."

"Oh, my poor Agnes, what became of her? How did she bear my fate?"

"With woman's heroism and sublime faith. She believed that you would return. She sought every captain of vessels bound for Australia that she could hear of, and commissioned them to find you; but your identity was lost in some number, and disappointment awaited her every effort."

"My poor Agnes!"

"At last she received such words of encouragement that she seriously thought of embarking for Australia."

"Not Agnes, my shy, shrinking Agnes—"

The rest of my narrative came to a sudden termination.

The moonlight was streaming white and radiant over the tropical verdure of the island and the wide desert of water. All the wild, weird noises of an Australian night were chorusing upon the air, and there, in the low doorway of the shepherd's cabin, stood the figure of a woman.

William Bond turned in that direction; his sight rested upon the apparition. He rubbed his eyes, arose stiffly and advanced towards the figure. She turned so that the light fell upon her face.

"Agnes!" he gasped in a husky whisper, and swaying to and fro, fell heavily to the earth before I could prevent it.

He had never fully recovered from the many wounds which he had received from the hands of his assailants on the night of our first acquaintance.

"I thought she was here, that she stood in the doorway," were his first words on recovering consciousness.

"I am here, William," said the soft voice.

"Then where am I?"

"Where you have been this long, dreary time," she went on. "Oh, William, what a bright portion of our lives has been wasted!"

He groaned aloud, holding her thin hands.

I went out to care for our horses, and purposely remained away an hour. On my return I found them nearly as I had left them, Agnes upon her knees, and Bond with his head upon a rough moss pillow. Question doubtless had followed question, until the main points in the case of both were well understood.

When I entered they came back upon the subject of the mutiny. Mrs. Bond dwelt with deep horror upon the perils that at one time surrounded her. She had mostly been confined to her berth before the outbreak. After that she found herself too ill to arise, until with the greatest effort she walked ashore.

The past to both seemed the horrors of a dream, from which they would most gladly awaken. Their regrets for the past, however, were outweighed in a measure by the solemn joy of reunion.

In the morning I went back with the horses, vainly urging Bond and his wife to accompany me. I could well imagine how much they had yet to say to each other, and Bond was so well convinced that the prime mover against his peace and safety was no more, that he felt no apprehension in his isolated condition.

I found everything progressing merrily at the Spauldings. Ellen was in exalted spirits; but I did not like the intended bridegroom. And you may be sure that he felt my aversion and repayed it with interest. He was possessed of an elegant figure and of a pleasing enough address, but he had the eye of a fiend. Several times when he was narrating some Etonian incident or experience, I would catch his eyes shifting their position under the drooping lids, and watching the changes of my face. By a hundred nameless little things I found that Lieutenant Spaulding was enduring a keen disappointment in some way connected with his future son-in-law, but the volatile Ellen realized nothing, save that she was to get into the world again. So matters progressed speedily towards the early wedding day.

The chaplain at the barracks was to perform the ceremony. At last, the momentous day arrived. Spaulding had sent me out to bring in our mutual friends, the Bonds.

The chaplain, in his white neck-cloth and collar, book in hand, stood gravely prepared to begin the marriage service. Everything was awaiting the Bonds. Ellen, in a twitter of delight, was robed in a simple, pretty manner. The bridegroom elect was flushed and triumphant.

William Bond and his wife now entered the room. Agnes looked around, in a strange and bewildered way, and opened her mouth, as if to speak, two or three times.

The service began, and proceeded as far as, "You, Henry Glover,"—when a piercing shriek startled all present. Agnes Bond was swooning, or dying. Quite an uproar ensued. William Bond hastened to support his wife. The bridegroom was urging the chaplain to proceed. Spaulding's face was covered with a bluish pallor; and I was in vain trying to make out what Agnes Bond's purple lips were saying.

I motioned to Spaulding.

THE TOWN MOUSE.

ome to spend the Christmas with us, we must try and put some roses in your cheeks."
roses in yours:—Granpa has lots—but they're on his nose though!"

"Don't let the service go on just yet," I said. "There is something wrong."

Agnes gave me a look of gratitude, struggled up to her feet, and fell again, struggled up and fell, still working her hands with an imploring gesture, and staring her glazing eyes towards the bridegroom.

"My God, she is dying!" exclaimed Bond, in an agony of feeling, as he knelt beside her, where she had at last tumbled in a heap upon the floor.

"No," I calmly answered. "It is a species of cataleptic fit. She was weak, and the excitement of the last few months, added to some sudden, terrible emotion, has brought on the spasm."

To Spaulding, I added.—

"Don't let the service proceed—wait until she recovers speech."

"Who licenses your interference?" called out the groom in tones of thunder.

"Your manner, Sir, if nothing else," I coolly replied. "Spaulding, bring us some spirits and water."

I never saw so fiendish a face as the waiting bridegroom turned upon me. He made a step forward as if to spring, but glancing upon the company he restrained himself, although his emotion shook him like a leaf.

In half an hour Agnes had recovered from the spasms enough to whisper—

"Get some—officers—quietly. That is not—Henry Glover."

Bond stole softly away, and notified the commander at the station. A posse of troops came up.

"Now," said Mrs. Bond, as her lips were moistened with a little cordial; and, struggling to her feet, aided by myself on one side, and by her husband on the other, "I will take oath that yonder man is not Henry Glover."

Her utterance was thick, but she was distinctly understood by every one present. "He must be one of the mutinous convicts, dressed in murdered Henry's clothes."

With a wild scream Ellen fell into her mother's arms. A pistol ball grazed Mrs. Bond's cheek and lodged in her husband's fore arm. Another struck me on the collar bone and passed up and into my shoulder, and the supposed Henry Glover dashed for the open window. He leaped into a circle of waiting soldiers. He dashed this way and that, in a futile attempt to escape, and firing the other charges of his revolver at random. Neither did he yield until shot down by the squad of troops.

In the delirium that ensued before he died—gangrene following upon his wound—he raved of his plans. He was one of the leaders of the mutineers, and he had somehow smuggled a file, or other instrument, into his quarters, with which, at the right time, he freed himself and companions. Their attempt at capturing the ship failing, in the confusion that followed, he had managed, with the skill of a sorcerer, to immerge from the hold, metamorphosed into the likeness of Henry Glover, whose dead body was pitched into the sea for the body of a mutineer.

It is likely that when Glover was wounded he had fallen into the hold. Afterwards, when the hatches were battened down upon the convicts, the gang in league together had placed upon him such of their garb as should deceive the crew in regard to the identity of the body, under the promise that in the freedom of their leader they had secured an ally to their future escape.

The mind capable of so much stratagem, was capable of carrying it out. He remained, as Henry Glover, close in his berth for weeks, from the inconvenience of a flesh wound in the leg—but in reality, to study the murdered man's papers, and form his plans of future action. All would have been smooth sailing, as none of the family had seen the real Henry for five years, only the real Henry, in the kindness of his nature, had tried to relieve the monotony of the voyage, by an exchange of experience with Mrs. Bond, and insured her sympathy for his bright hopes—hopes, alas! going out in the darkness of untimely death.

The convict had hugged closely to his berth until the growth of hair and beard had changed his looks; and if Spaulding and I had worked to promote the reunion of Bond and his wife, he had been amply repaid in his daughter's temporal salvation, as apparently, nothing would have betrayed the impostor save Agnes Bond's recognition.

Bond, in another attack upon himself, found his assailants to be escaped convicts, whose hate he had engendered years before by bringing them to justice, helping to track and capture them. He wisely concluded to return to England, with his wife, whose feeble health was terribly affected by the dangers which surrounded them. Ellen returned with them; and Spaulding's family, a year later, sighted Albion's cliffs as they were homeward bound.

THE skating fever has set in again; all the youth hereabouts have had a touch of it with aggravating symptoms. Ha! yes; bright eyes, glowing cheeks, and happy voices. Dainty feet twinkling, and red petticoats flashing everywhere:

"And here we fall,
And there we sprawl—
This tumbling is pernicious;
Yet Charley swears,
And Blanche declares,
That skating's quite delicious."

☞ THE DIFFERENCE.—Most women will forgive a liberty, rather than a slight; and if any woman were to bang a man for stealing her picture, although it were set in gold, it would be a new case in law; but if he carried off the setting, and left the portrait behind, we would not answer for his safety.

☞ The coming man—the collector of yearly bills.

Answers to Correspondents.

ADDITIONS TO CLUBS.—A correspondent asks "If additions can be made to clubs at the same rate." Yes.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—All manuscripts sent to us should have the price marked upon them if any is desired. Original and literary communications will be retained at first if a good field is afforded them to display their talents and gain a name. We do not guarantee the safe return of manuscripts, but endeavor to return it when declined, and when the requisite stamps are sent. Articles may be good of their kind, and not be suitable for our purposes. Experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their articles prompt attention.

Do not write to us asking whether you shall send on your manuscripts for examination—but send them on at once.

MRS. C. M. (Ireland,) Dubois county, Indiana. Offer declined.

ANNIE D. (Maine), writes: "I wish to ask your advice on a subject which is of importance to me, which I would like answered through the columns of your paper. For some time past I have been engaged to a young gentleman who at first paid me every attention, but a short time since he became acquainted with a young lady, who, I know, is superior to me in beauty, and who has so completely fascinated him that his attention to me has been less marked, and he is less frequent. I still love him, however, but have reason to think that he will soon ask a release from his engagement to me. Last week I received an offer of marriage from a wealthy gentleman, whom I do not love, but sincerely respect. I am somewhat perplexed as to what I had better do, whether to accept this offer, or reject it, in the hope that my former lover will return." If your former lover is treating you so cavalierly, we should think that you would not be very anxious to have him return. If you have sufficient reason to think that he wishes to break the engagement, you had better ask an explanation. As to the second gentleman, we must leave you to be governed by your own judgment. We cannot advise any one to marry where she does not love, and yet it would be foolish to deny that marriage founded on esteem have sometimes proved happy ones.

P. W. J. (Poland N. Y.), writes: "I avail myself of your correspondents' column to ask a few questions. First. What is Irrigation? I know it means watering. But how is it done in those countries where it is practiced for the purpose of raising vegetables or grain of any kind. Do you know anything of the climate or soil of the peninsula between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays? Is there a great deal of wind, and from what direction do the prevailing winds blow?" Irrigation is performed by the aid of reservoirs or canals, for the purpose of reserving the water, and of a system of ditches and sluices by which it is conveyed in the proper quantities to the fields which need its reviving influence. In some countries this system of improving land is carried to a surprising extent. Thus, in Central Asia, the large river Oxus is rendered unnavigable during certain seasons of the year, by the vast volume of water which is drawn off to supply the canals and ditches of the Turcistan agriculturists. The two principal virtues of the peninsula referred to are peaches and canvas-back ducks. Its two great vices, mosquitoes and ague. Its climate is several degrees warmer than that of your locality. Its soil varied in character, there being much good land. There is a good deal of wind—when it blows hard. There are no prevailing winds, to our knowledge.

MISS JENNIE B. (Mansfield, O.) writes: "Will you please answer, through your 'Correspondents' Column,' the following questions: 1st. In dancing the quadrille, some ladies appear to walk through the figure, or do not seem to exert themselves to any but most motion that one can hardly call it anything but walking. Do you consider this more graceful, or in better taste than the swinging, tiptoeing step adopted by many who profess to be dancers? 2d. If a lady has a good partner, can she go through the quadrille without mistakes, even though she do not know all the figures? 3d. In what terms do you accept and how decline an invitation to dance? 4th. How should a velvet cloak be put away for the summer so as to keep entirely? 5th. In the winter, when changing the wardrobe, do you think it should have any protection from dust? 6th. How do you congratulate a bride? Are there any other forms beside the hackneyed 'Accept my congratulations?' I have found a great deal of pleasure and profit in reading this column of your paper, and shall be greatly indebted to you for answering my queries." To our taste a happy medium is far the most graceful in dancing the plain quadrilles. Walking is not dancing. Neither are the peculiar evolutions in which some ladies indulge. If a lady has a good partner, tact, and a good eye, she can easily go through a quadrille without knowing all the figures. The mode of accepting or declining an invitation to dance is generally apply on the form of the invitation. Yes, or No, with your reasons, if you have any; with all the flowery politeness at your command if you have no reasons. 4th. It should be put away with great attention to smoothness, carefully avoiding creases or anything that will affect its future appearance. Of course dust is injurious to it. 5th. The set terms, we suppose, are as immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, but you are privileged to add to them in a reasonable extent.

SUBSCRIBER (Fairmont City, I. T.) asks: "Please inform me in your Answers to Correspondents where and at what price I can get a good work on Cranberry culture." You had better write to some book publisher. Any large publishing house will give you the desired information.

MRS. J. A. W. (Richfield, O.,) writes: "One year ago I subscribed for two papers; one called The Maple Leaves, published by Roorback; and the other the Rural American, by Milner, of New Brunswick. I received each paper about three months, and since, and letters of inquiry elicit no reply. Can you tell me what has become of the publishers or their papers?" We are sorry to be unable to give our correspondent any information about the parties or papers in question.

A. F. (Pemberton, N. J.,) writes: "On what principle does the Gyroscope operate?" We should be very glad if our correspondent could give us a clear explanation of the principle of operation, as scientists are, as yet, very much in the dark concerning it. The principle it displays is that when a heavy mass is made to rotate rapidly, it strongly tends to preserve the direction of its axis of rotation, so that a degree of force is necessary to turn it into another direction. Why the mere movement of rotation has such an influence upon the axis is yet among the mysteries, despite many attempts at explanation. The Gyroscope principle has been lately applied for the purpose of steadying spy glasses at sea, and has been found to operate successfully, a distant object being steadily observed from the deck of a pitching ship.

W. E. R. (Newport, Pa.,) writes: "Allow me to intrude on your kindness. 1st. What is the width of the locks in the Champlain Canal? 2d. How much do you think a side-wheel steamboat would cost, 100 feet long and 18 feet beam? Fitted up the same as large steamers. 3d. Is the Oswego river, and those lakes of which it is the outlet, navigable, in New York state? 4th. I am sixteen, and I want to go to school one year more, and then learn Engineering; but my parents are opposed to my learning Engineering. How long does it take to learn to run a Marine Engine, and what must a person do?" What would you say about me learning Engineering? Please answer soon." 1st. We are not aware of their exact dimensions. 2d. We do not know. There would probably be a considerable variation in cost between different builders. 3d. It cannot be usefully navigable, as there is a considerable fall in the town of Oswego at its mouth. 4th. As we do not know so much about the case as your parents, we are not nearly so competent to answer; and so, if you need advice on the subject, must advise you to take theirs, as they probably have reasons for their decision which you are neither old nor experienced enough to appreciate. If you will allow us to give a hint we would advise you to study Orthography awhile longer, before trying Engineering. The question how long it will take to properly perform any kind of work depends so largely on a person's natural ability and application, that we must decline answering without knowing these data.

ACCOMPLISHED, (Phila.), writes: "Please inform me what books you would advise me to read to improve myself? I have a good, sound education, but wish a better one. Have a good situation, and plenty of spare time to study. What language is easiest to study without a master? By answering the above you will oblige." It would not take us long to decide this matter for ourselves, but it is quite a different thing to decide it for another. Not knowing the scope of your education, we might advise you to study some branch in which you are already booked. And not being aware of your tastes, might recommend to you some distasteful study. We can only say, if you wish improvement, don't read too many novels, or only those of acknowledged excellence. If you have a taste for poetry, read carefully all that you find to your liking. So much to oil the wheels of life, and improve you artistically. You cannot read too much good history, or travels; but we should advise you to read no book that has lived many years without winning a reputation. Political Economy is an excellent branch of education, if your fancy inclines that way. If you like the sciences, and wish an talking of them all, there are manuals which will give you a sufficient general idea of each branch. But, as a general rule, read no work on science that is over ten years old, for there has been almost a scientific revolution within that period. If your taste runs to particulars, instead of generalities, devote yourself to some single branch, and keep at it for a lifetime, or until you know something about it. No language is easy without a master. Spanish and Italian are probably the easiest, as their pronunciation is most readily attained.

MINER (Port Carbon, Pa.,) writes: "I am anxious to have some statistical information in relation to the production of coal in the United States and England. Also tell me what is now thought concerning the statement made a short time ago, that the English mines were nearly exhausted, and would not last more than a century longer." The production of coal in Great Britain in 1867, amounted to one hundred and four million tons. In the United States, the same year, it was about twenty-five million tons—only about one-fourth the quantity. A commission was lately appointed to inquire into the state of the English coal mines, and reported that there is sufficient coal, that can be profitably mined, to last for at least five or six centuries. Long before the coal gives out the cost of mining will so increase as to put a stop to mining operations.

A. B. S. (Little Rock,) writes: "I would like to know the full acceptation of the word Cycle. As ordinarily used, it has a very indefinite meaning, and I would be glad to have a more satisfactory rendering of the term. Please answer soon." A Cycle means a series of events or numbers which perpetually recur in the same order. There are several astronomical cycles in historical existence. Thus Meton's Cycle, as devised by the Athenian Meton, is a period of nineteen years, at whose end the phases of the moon repeat themselves on the same days as previously. The Cycle of the Sun, is a period of twenty-eight years, the Sunday letters recurring in the same order as before, at the end of every twenty-eight years. The Platonic Cycle, or Great year, is that at which all the constellations return to their previous state. Tycho Brahe calculates this period to be 25,816,167 years. Hecuit makes it 136,901 years.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]

CONUNDRUMS.

☞ Why is a Theatre a most melancholy object? ANS.—Because the people are in tiers.

☞ Why is a Turk like a gymnast. ANS. Because he is a mussel-man.

☞ Hold up your hand, and then you will see what you never did see, never can see, and never will see.—That the little finger is as long as the middle one.

☞ What class of women are apt to give tone to society? ANS.—The belles.

☞ When does a sailor take least room in a ship? ANS.—When he sleeps in his watch.

☞ In what way does a lady treat a man like a telescope? ANS.—When she pulls him out, looks him through, and then shuts him up.

☞ Why is the early grass like a penknife? ANS.—Because the spring brings out the blades.

☞ Why would Venus descending from Olympus be like a liberal husband? ANS.—Because she would come down handsome.

☞ Why is Alexis a very fast man. ANS. Because he's always a Ruskin. (Russian).

☞ Why is an Editor like a carpenter work? ANS.—Because he is often Bored.

☞ When is a woman like a sparrow? ANS.—When she's in earnest (in her nest).

RECEIPTS.

OYSTER SOUP FOR THE COUNTRY.—Throw two quarts of oysters into three pints boiling water. Let it boil up and take off the scum. Have ready a small tablespoon of sifted flour, worked in a teacup of fresh butter; stir this into the soup, and as soon as it boils remove it from the fire. If the soup is preferred quite thick, add a teacupful of crackers rolled very fine. Serve with toasted bread or crackers. Many persons are fond of cream in oysters. If used, heat it over water, and stir it in the soup when dishing; a pint of very rich cream will make three-fourths of a tureen full. Pepper should be added at table; many persons never use it in oysters. We never use mace or nutmeg; in our method of cooking, we aim to preserve the principal flavor of every dish, and consider when this is accomplished, the perfection of cooking is attained.

PEA SOUP.—Boil the peas until tender in sufficient water for the soup, then mash one-third of them, and stir them in the broth; season with butter and salt. Some one sweet herbs with peas, but we think the flavor of each vegetable should be preserved separately, if possible. One reason why there is such sameness at public tables is, that all kinds of meats and vegetables are seasoned with the same herbs and spices.

FRIED BEEFSTEAK TO RESEMBLE BROILING.—Beat a spider so very hot, that flour will burn on it instantly; wipe it free from dust, and lay in the steak; it should brown immediately; take it from the spider before it has had time to cook any part except the browning that came in contact with the spider; lay it on the platter, which should stand over hot water; heat the spider again; wipe it free from fat, and brown the other side in the same manner as the first. Have butter, pepper, and salt, for the gravy, laid on the platter to melt, while the last is browning; remove the steak to the platter, and soak it in the gravy, add a tablespoon of boiling water to the gravy, and serve immediately. When these directions are followed to the letter, there are but few, that would imagine the beef otherwise cooked, than broiled. It is far before a poorly broiled steak. If desired well done, the process must be repeated, not left in to fry, until cooked through, as that would give a taste like fried beef to the whole dish. If the juice of the meat stands on the steak, when the first side is browning, lift the beef carefully, so as to pour it from the beef into platter. If any escapes to the spider, it will be worse than wasted if added to the gravy.

TAPIOCA PUDDING, No. 1.—Soak three tablespoonfuls of tapioca in a quart of milk; flavor with nutmeg, add salt and sugar to the taste; beat four eggs and stir into the mixture; and bake three-fourths of an hour very steadily; serve with sour sance.

TAPIOCA PUDDING, No. 2.—Soak in one quart of night's milk four heaping tablespoonfuls of tapioca; in the morning, boil it over steam until quite thick, stirring it from the bottom several times; add a piece of fresh butter as large as an egg, one-quarter of a pound of sugar, and four well-beaten eggs, and lastly, a pint of sweet thin cream from the morning's milk; flavor with nutmeg; if the butter does not make it sufficiently salt, add a little salt. Bitter almond can be used in place of nutmeg if relished; bake a half-hour, serve with butter and sugar worked to a cream, and thinned with a gill of hot wine.

DELICATE CUP CAKE.—One cup of butter, three of loaf-sugar pulverized, the whites of ten eggs, five cups of flour, in which two teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar have been mixed and sifted. The flour must always be sifted before measuring; and then again, after the tartar is in, and lastly, a cup of sweet cream with a teaspoonfull of soda dissolved in it and strained. This can be varied by mixing through it a few currants. Delicate cake is now the fashionable cake for bride's loaves at weddings. The richest should be used for that purpose.